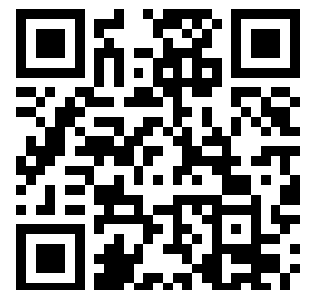

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THE RIFLE CORPS
1800-1808



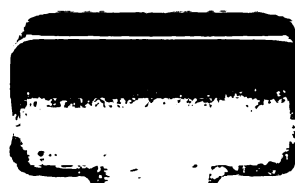
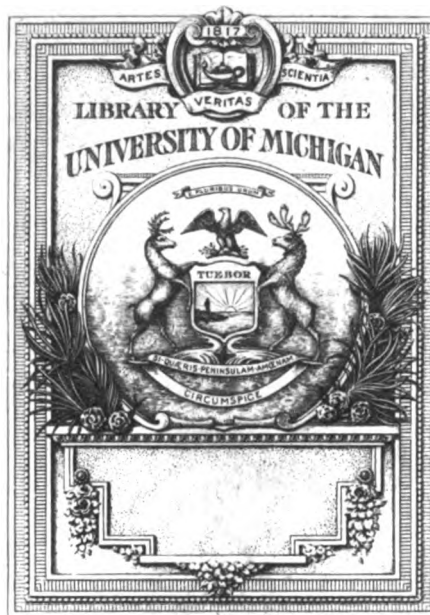
THE RIFLE REGIMENT
1808-1818



HISTORY & CAMPAIGNS
OF
THE RIFLE BRIGADE

PART II., 1809-1813

WILLOUGHBY VERNER



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*Field Marshal The Marquis of Wellington.
Duke of Vitoria & Generalissimo of the combined Armies in Spain. 1813.
From a painting by Robert Home. Engraved by D. Heis*

HISTORY & CAMPAIGNS OF THE RIFLE BRIGADE

Willoughby BY *Cole*
GENERAL WILLOUGHBY VERNER

(LATE RIFLE BRIGADE)

Major-General of H.R.H. George, Duke of Cambridge, &c.

PART II

1809—1813

London:

JOHN BALE, SONS & DANIELSSON, LTD.

OXFORD HOUSE

114, GREAT TITCHFIELD STREET, OXFORD STREET, W. 1.

1919

Portrait of the Marquis of Wellington.

Generalissimo of the combined forces in Spain. 1813.

Painted by Sir John Martin. Engraved by G. B. S.

HISTORY & CAMPAIGNS OF THE RIFLE BRIGADE

BY
COLONEL ^{William} WILLOUGHBY ^{Cole} VERNER
(LATE RIFLE BRIGADE)

Author of "The Military Life of H.R.H. George, Duke of Cambridge," &c.

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TO
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THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT AND STRATHEARN
COLONEL-IN-CHIEF
OF
THE RIFLE BRIGADE
BY
HIS MOST OBEDIENT AND HUMBLE SERVANT

Willoughby Verner

Libie
Thorp
12-19-28
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ERRATA.

PART I.—P. 3, footnote 3, last line, for "i., 165" *read* "ii., 286."

P. 9, footnote 2, last line, for "1871" *read* "1868."

PART II.—P. 25, footnote 2, last line, for "at Alameda" *read* "near Madrid" (see p. 424).

P. 34, line 9, after "islands" *insert* full stop; after "Stewart" *insert* comma.

P. 81, line 14, for "west" *read* "east."

P. 134, line 11, for "Sarnadas" *read* "Sarzedas."

P. 339, line 10, full stop *omitted* after "19th" and before "Wellington."

CHAPTER I.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RIFLE FIRE IN THE BRITISH ARMY, 1800-1815.

After Coruña—Making good the losses—Call for Volunteers—Wide popularity of the Rifle Corps—Raising the 3rd Battalion—The new Colonels-Commandant—The development of the cult of the rifle—Various rifle corps in the British Service—The West India Garrison—Foreign rifle corps in these islands—Their drafting into the 60th—Baron Hompesch and Prince Löwenstein raise new rifle corps—Dress of riflemen in the Continental armies at this period—Copied by British Army—Introduction of “rifle companies” into British Regiments of the Line—De Rolls Regiment—Bourbon and Ceylon Regiments—Rifle Companies in the East Indies—Chasseurs Britanniques—The Dutch Regiment of Rifles—The “Black Brunswickers”—The King’s German Legion—Its “Light Battalions” and “Sharpshooters”—The Portuguese Caçadores—Their armament and uniform—The armament of the various rifle corps—The manufacture and issue of Baker rifles 1803-1809.

THE year 1809 as we have seen opened inauspiciously for England. True Sir John Moore had defeated Soult before Coruña, but his death and the subsequent hurried embarkation of his Force gave reasonable grounds for the public to view the whole business as one of defeat and disaster. Naturally enough in view of the fact that the English had left the country, Soult claimed the fight as a victory for the French arms and as such it is regarded by our neighbours to this day. The best reply to this lies in the fact that had Soult won the battle, the British Force would have been practically annihilated. As it was, he failed at every point of attack and withdrew sadly stricken to the position he had occupied in the morning and the British

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were able to carry out their re-embarkation with little or no molestation.

The horror and astonishment of the nation at seeing the terrible condition of the British soldiers on their return from this most trying campaign have been already mentioned. I will now follow out the story of the Rifle Regiment upon its return to its old quarters in Hythe barracks and show how the losses in the ranks were made good.

Orders were issued to complete both battalions to a strength of a thousand men each. The recruits were obtained almost entirely from the militia. Sir William Cope records how the regiment had already become so famous and so popular that not only were the deficiencies filled up in a very short time but more than a thousand volunteers presented themselves in excess of its requirements.

The following return shows the strength of the two battalions on 10 May 1809.

	Effective, 1 April, pre- vious to Militia volunteering	Left in Portugal	Left in Spain	VOLUNTEERS FROM MILITIA		Totals
				English	Irish	
1st Battalion	799	8	88	641	None	1,536
2nd Battalion	863	37	38	641	None	1,579
	1,662	45	126	1,282	None	3,115

When it is recalled that practically all the regiments employed in the Coruña campaign were in need of recruits and that a call was made for 18,000 men, this extraordinary rush to one of the most junior regiments in our Army is at first sight remarkable. For in brief the demand for some 350 recruits was quickly responded to by close upon 1,300. But the conditions were wholly abnormal. Men desirous of joining the Infantry of our Army had of course a wide choice before

Development of Rifle Fire in the Army, 1800—15 3

them and as a general rule were guided in their selection by the alleged merits and attractions of various regiments. Still whatever corps they joined, Guards or Line, they donned the red coat. But in the Rifle Corps an entirely new picture of soldiering was held before them. The mere fact that it was the *only* Regiment of Rifles composed of men of British nationality at the time in our Army was naturally an enormous inducement, for this alone centred attention on it and its doings. It would be affectation to pretend for a moment that the British recruit in 1809 had any desire or wish, even had he the power, to enlist in one of the corps of foreign riflemen then in our service which were never seen, had hitherto had but few opportunities of distinguishing themselves, and were for the most part condemned to perpetual foreign service of a specially objectionable nature in the West Indies.

So much for the mere fact of "The Rifles" being at the time a unique corps. Although less than ten years had passed since they had been first raised, as all who have read the first portion of this book will have perceived, they had been extraordinarily fortunate in being included in almost every expedition of note and had almost as invariably distinguished themselves. Whether it was under Nelson at Copenhagen or at the storming of Monte Video under Auchmuty, with Wellesley in Portugal or under Moore at Coruña, their deeds were in everyone's mouth. Lastly the general nature of their duties appealed to many daring youths who possibly had visions of opportunities of distinguishing themselves by individual action which would not occur to the ordinary steadfast British Infantryman manœuvring in close order. Nor were our Riflemen at all inclined to hide their light and leading from public gaze. Officers, Non-commissioned officers and Private Riflemen alike used every means to attract good recruits. It is on record how parties of the Rifle Corps, the same men who had stormed at Monte Video, who had driven the French with such dash and determination from the

rugged heights of Roliça and who had fought only recently so stubbornly at Coruña, swept through the quiet English country villages rousing the sleepy inhabitants with the brazen notes of their bugles and shouting, "*Hurrah for the first in the field and the last out of it, the bloody fighting Ninety-fifth*"¹ and similar elegant appeals to the martial ardour of the yokels. Of the host of recruits who were attracted to the corps the novelty of the Green Jacket alone accounted for not a few. Surtees who belonged to the 56th Pompadours says that after he had once seen a British Rifleman, he was not content until he got transferred to the 95th. Rifleman Harris, who was in the 66th, describes how when he saw the 95th Rifles "he fell in love with their smart, dashing, and devil-may-care appearance" and volunteered forthwith.² Edward Costello makes a similar admission. In numerous journals allusions will be found to this factor as having attracted recruits, both officers and men, to the regiment. In letters of this period and in many contemporary books it is interesting to note how "The Rifle Corps" or "The Rifles" had become accepted popular titles. Seldom is the regiment referred to as "the 95th or Rifle Regiment" (its strictly correct designation) but rather as "The Rifle Corps" and frequently "the famous Rifle Corps,"³ whilst Moore (brother of Sir John) in his history of the Coruña campaign, alludes to it as "the brave Rifle Corps." With such ideas widespread amongst those who sought to serve in our Army it is therefore not surprising that in the course of a very few days the call for 338 volunteers from the militia brought in no less than 1,282 recruits. The Authorities thereupon were compelled to close further recruiting for the Rifles and most wisely decided to form an additional or third battalion. Major and Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel McLeod of the 1st Battalion was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel to command it. Very shortly afterwards he exchanged with Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Barnard whose name, as Sir W. Cope

¹ *Random Shots*, 16.

² *Recollections*, 9.

³ Basil Hall.

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most truly says, is indelibly connected with the subsequent history of the regiment. Only two or three others of the promotions consequent on the formation of an additional battalion were given to the regiment, the services of those by whose valour and sufferings the regiment had obtained the fame which attracted these volunteers and to whose exertions in recruiting their great number was due, being with the usual injustice of the British Government to its Military defenders, ignored. General Sir David Dundas, then Commander-in-Chief of the Army, became Colonel-in-Chief on 31 August 1809 in place of Manningham and the Colonelcies of the three battalions were bestowed on Major-Generals Forbes Champagné, Sir Brent Spencer and the Hon. William Stewart. Thus was restored to the roll of the regiment the honoured name of its first Lieutenant-Colonel.¹

We thus have the 95th Rifle Regiment for the first time at its maximum strength of three battalions. This it maintained throughout the Peninsular War and at Waterloo, but in 1818 on the general reduction after the withdrawal of the Army of Occupation from Paris the 3rd Battalion was disbanded. As will be seen the 3rd Battalion during the nine years of its existence took part in many of the most famous of the battles of the British Army and gloriously maintained the reputation of the Rifle Regiment.

But because the 95th Regiment was thus known as "The Rifles," it would be incorrect to suppose that no other riflemen besides it and the 5th Battalion of the 60th existed in our Army at this period. True, it was the only Rifle Regiment, but as already pointed out in the first chapter of Part I of this book there were several corps of foreign riflemen existing in the British service before the first formation of the Rifle Corps. These almost without exception had been raised about the year 1794, for service in our West Indian possessions, which in those days loomed so largely in the estimation of the country

¹. Cope 43.

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and of our Military experts that at one time it was seriously considered whether we should not exchange Gibraltar for some of the Spanish West Indian Islands! The maintenance and defence of these islands was a matter of immense difficulty and perplexity to England as well as a great tax both in money and lives owing to the deadly nature of the climate. Fortescue describes how owing to this "the guardianship of the islands had tended to fall more and more into the hands of black troops and of foreign mercenaries."

By the opening years of the Nineteenth Century most of these corps of foreign riflemen had been broken up owing to the perennial difficulty of obtaining recruits from the Continent to make good the terrible losses attendant on West Indian Service. One after another they had been drafted, or in Fortescue's words they had been "swallowed up by the 60th."¹ Thus, "The York Rangers," a corps with riflemen clothed in green with red facings, had been drafted into the 2nd Battalion 60th. Waldstein's *Chasseurs*, another corps similarly uniformed, had been drafted into the 4th Battalion 60th, whilst Löwenstein's *Chasseurs*, a strong battalion clad in grey with green facings, and Hompesch's *Chasseurs* wearing the same uniform as Waldstein's *Chasseurs* and the York Rangers (now the well-known dress of the King's Royal Rifles), had, as we have seen, gone to form the 5th Battalion 60th. Apparently advantage was taken of this infusion of riflemen into the 60th to establish rifle flank companies in the first four battalions between 1797 and 1799.² The 6th Battalion 60th,

¹ Fortescue, iv. Part II, 896.

² The Inspection Reports of 1808 give the following proportion of rifles to muskets in these four Battalions of the 60th. Those of the 1st Battalion are noted "arms had been in use since 1797."

			Rifles and swords	Muskets and bayonets
1st Battalion	Jamaica	27 June	80	740
2nd "	Jersey	9 May	40	360
3rd "	Antigua	21 May	103	727
4th "	Antigua	15 June	80	720

Development of Rifle Fire in the Army, 1800—15 7

raised in 1799, had from its inception a rifle company, which according to Hamilton Smith's drawings was dressed like the other defunct rifle corps.¹ Both Hompesch and Löwenstein after their respective corps had been drafted into the 60th proceeded to raise fresh rifle corps. In June 1798, Baron Ferdinand de Hompesch was gazetted to command "A Regiment of Mounted Riflemen"² whilst Löwenstein raised a battalion of riflemen in Germany a few months later.³ Löwenstein's Corps served under Sir Ralph Abercromby in Egypt in 1801 and was then about 500 strong.⁴

With regard to the usual dress of the riflemen in European armies at this period, the *Jäger* in the Prussian Army wore green jackets with red facings and grey or blue trowsers, such as were worn by the 5th Battalion 60th for the first few years of its existence, as well as by several of the other corps of foreigners, whereas the Tyrolese *Jäger* in the Austrian Service wore the grey uniform with green facings similar to Löwenstein's.⁵ But the "all green" uniform of the 95th Rifle Corps with black facings was equally well known on the Continent, and was especially common in the Russian Army, and in all probability Manningham and Stewart derived their inspiration for this style of clothing from what Stewart saw of them in the Austrian and Russian Armies when with the Archduke Charles and Suwarrow in 1798-99.

As the value of rifle fire to cover an attack became better appreciated, the custom of forming rifle companies was extended in our British regiments. In some instances the ordinary "light

¹ Colonel Hamilton Smith was on the Staff in the West Indies 1806-08, and his original water-colour sketches of these various rifle corps can be seen at the South Kensington Museum. (See Folio 93. B. 7, p. 80.)

² Gazette, War Office, Dublin Castle, 19 June, 1798.

³ Pay List, 1—31 August, 1798. W.O. 12. 11923.

⁴ *Campaign in Egypt*, Walsh. Appendices 22, 25 and 47.

⁵ *The Military Costume of Europe*, London, 1812.

company" exchanged its muskets for rifles, in others a "rifle company" was formed in addition to the "grenadier" and "light companies." Thus in the attack and capture of Martinique and Guadaloupe in 1810 by General George Beckwith,¹ rifle companies were much employed. How many of the British regiments had their flank companies armed with rifles it is difficult to ascertain, but Beckwith in his Despatches mentions "the rifle company of the 1st Battalion of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers,"² and later on those of the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the 60th.³ The Royal York Rangers⁴ and the Royal West India Rangers which were also with Beckwith each had two rifle companies. But there were many other Foreign corps in our pay at this period which had rifle companies. Thus both battalions of De Rolls' Regiment (taken into our service in 1795 and disbanded in 1816) although dressed in scarlet had from their first formation rifle companies dressed in green.⁵ The Bourbon regiment and the 1st Ceylon regiment likewise had rifle companies.⁶

In 1810, Auchmuty took Java and stormed the lines of Cornelis on 26 August 1811, a splendid exploit. Here only four British regiments were employed, the 1st Battalions 14th, 59th, 69th and 78th Highlanders, and one and all had "rifle companies," as well as "light companies" and "grenadier companies" of the usual type.⁷

It is not very hard to draw the inference from these and similar examples that during the first fifteen years of the Nineteenth Century,

¹ Brother to Thomas Sidney Beckwith of the Rifle Corps.

² Fortescue, vii, 14.

³ *Ibid.* vii, 18.

⁴ This corps was the successor to the York Rangers raised in 1796 as a rifle corps and drafted into the 2nd Battalion 60th. The Inspection reports of 1815 give the following armament of these corps :—

Royal York Rangers	...	202 rifles, 1,097 muskets, 36 fusils.
--------------------	-----	---------------------------------------

Royal West India Rangers...	254	„	984	„	10 fusils.
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⁵ Wickham Correspondence, p. 64 (U.S. Journal, Jan. 1914).

⁶ Inspection Returns, Jan. 1814.

⁷ Fortescue, vii, 619.

Development of Rifle Fire in the Army, 1800—15 9

so far from the use of the rifle being confined to the 95th Rifle Corps and the 5th Battalion of the 60th, rifle companies were to be found almost everywhere where British troops were employed abroad, except in India.

Turning now nearer home we find the Dutch regiment of Rifles raised in 1799 and disbanded in 1802. This Corps was armed with rifles of Dutch manufacture. The *Chasseurs Britanniques* formed in 1794 which served in Egypt in 1801 and went out to the Peninsula in 1811, was not a rifle corps, but was clothed in red and armed with muskets and boasted of a "grenadier" and a "light" Company.¹

In 1809 the Duke of Brunswick Oël's *Jäger* regiment popularly known as the "Black Brunswickers" which had a proportion of riflemen, joined the British service. They were a motley lot and could not always be trusted at the outposts. All the same the Corps contained many good shots and daring men, and Wellington made use of it by breaking it up and posting the rifle companies to do light infantry work with various brigades. By such means did he control their propensity to desert to the enemy. This Corps as well as the others here mentioned were taken into the service of the Crown and figured in the Annual Army Lists among the Infantry of the Line.

But besides these light infantry and rifle corps in the British Service there were several light infantry regiments, some of them armed with rifles, in the two foreign contingents which fought throughout the Peninsular War alongside of our Riflemen.

The first of these foreign contingents was the famous King's German Legion raised in 1804 consisting largely of Hanoverians which numbered amongst its regiments the 1st and 2nd Light Battalions. These were dressed as riflemen in green jackets with black facings; the 1st Light Infantry wore grey trowsers and a head-dress similar to

¹ Larpent's *Private Journal*.

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that worn by the 5th Battalion 60th. The 2nd Light Infantry wore black trowsers and the same head-dress as the 95th Rifles and, save that it did not wear the narrow white piping to cuffs and collar, was almost identical with it.¹ Both of these Light Battalions had a considerable number of men armed with rifles.²

Major Beamish in his "History of the King's German Legion" is careful to describe the *Jäger* Battalions of the Legion as the "1st and 2nd Light Battalions" and in his book gives good coloured illustrations of the officers of the various corps from which it will be seen that the King's German Light Infantry were dressed somewhat like the 95th Rifles and even more like the riflemen of the 5th Battalion of the 60th.³

In addition to these two light Corps every line battalion of the King's German Legion had in each company ten men armed with rifles, known as "sharpshooters."

The second of these foreign contingents was the Portuguese Army under General Beresford which at first contained six battalions of Caçadores, increased in 1811 to twelve.

There has been some doubt as to whether the Caçadores were armed with light muskets (known as fusils) or with rifles. Major

¹ *History of the King's German Legion*, Beamish, 84-89. See also Plates.

² In an Inspection Return of the K.G.L. dated May 5, 1814, at St. Etienne the proportion of rifles to smooth-bores was as follows :—

			Rifles and swords		Muskets and bayonets
1st Light Battalion ...	...	...	392	...	253
2nd Light Battalion	...	...	392	...	253

³ Mr. Oman in his "Wellington's Army" has reproduced in monochrome one of these plates (No. V) styled by Beamish "Officer 2nd Light Infantry K.G.L." and has renamed it "Officer of Rifles 1809." That it is probably a fair representation of the dress of the 95th Rifles or 5th Battalion 60th in 1809 is beside the mark. It was drawn and published to represent an officer of a Light Battalion of the K.G.L. which corps, as we have seen, had a considerable proportion of its men armed with smooth-bore muskets.

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J. Seixeira Botelho of the Portuguese Artillery who has devoted much study to the subject and to whom I am indebted for much of the information here given inclines to the belief that some of the *caçador* regiments had light muskets and some had rifles. It is of interest to note that Wellesley in June 1809 applied for 40,000 knapsacks and 2,000 rifles for Beresford's Portuguese Army¹ then in course of formation. The *paper* strength of Beresford's Infantry force at this time was 40,810 of which 4,620 were Caçadores. These *caçador* battalions although of a paper strength of 770 R. and F. were actually only about 550 strong.² Assuming that the 2,000 rifles were destined for these six battalions, it would give about 330 rifles to 220 muskets in each of them. This proportion is strikingly like that which is found in the Light Infantry Battalions of the King's German Legion at the same period viz. 392 rifles to 253 muskets. Again it is always possible that some of the Caçadores, at any rate in the first years of their existence, were armed with rifles of Portuguese manufacture. That such weapons were in use among the Portuguese levies is proved by a letter of Wellesley's written at the time of his advance to the Douro in which he says: "The Portuguese riflemen, the students I believe behaved remarkably well."³

Again later on he orders the formation of an ammunition depot at Almeida (the frontier fortress) "in view of the future operations of the army" to comprise amongst other things 1,200,000 rounds of musket ammunition and 200,000 rounds of rifle ammunition.⁴ Since in 1809 the number of muskets and of rifles carried by the British force in Wellesley's command was in the proportion of about 14 to 1 it is

¹ Wellesley to Castlereagh, 11 June 1809. Well. Desp. iv, 418.

² Oman says 500. *Wellington's Army*, p. 229.

³ Wellesley to Villiers, 11 May 1809. Desp. iv, 321.

⁴ Wellesley's Memo, to O.C.R.A. Abrantes, 24 June 1809.

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probable that this abnormal provision of rifle ammunition at an advanced depot must have been based on the requirements of the Portuguese Caçadores as well.

Since two of the regiments of Portuguese Caçadores were embodied in the Light Division in 1810 and subsequently did such gallant service throughout the Peninsular campaigns, some description of them may be given here and more especially since little is known about them, their dress and their armament. To begin with their title of Caçadores (or Cazadores as it is sometimes spelt) is derived from the word *cazar*, to hunt, a *cazador* being a hunter or sportsman, the equivalent being the French *chasseur* and the German and Austrian *jäger*. No little difficulty has been introduced by the popular belief, derived it is hard to say where, that every *caçador*, *chasseur* or *jäger* was necessarily a "rifleman." Such however is now known to have not been the case in the times with which this history deals, still it requires much research to find out whether a particular corps styled "*chasseurs*" or "Light Infantry" were armed with smooth-bore muskets or rifles or a proportion of both.

The six *caçador* battalions were alike dressed in riflemen's jackets of the peculiar brown shade known to artists as "burnt umber" and it is interesting to note that this shade of brown especially when much worn and exposed to sun and weather, is nothing more or less than the familiar khaki of to-day only of a somewhat darker hue.

In the Artillery Museum in Lisbon there are small models of soldiers dressed in the uniforms worn during the Peninsular War and among them is one of a private soldier of the 1st Caçadores in brown jacket and trowsers. The jacket is laced across the front with eight parallel stripes of black braid and there are three rows of silver buttons, very much as worn at one time by the Rifles. The regiments were all dressed alike save for the facings, the 1st *caçador* Regiment having blue cuffs and the 3rd, yellow cuffs and facings. Both had green

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light infantry “wings” on their shoulders. The shako was of the tall cylindrical pattern with a green tuft in front below which was the numeral of the corps in white metal and a plain bugle without tassels or bugle cords, of exactly the same pattern as is worn by the Rifle Brigade to this day in front of the astrachan rifle cap of the officers, but with the mouthpiece of the bugle to the right instead of on the left. The other *caçador* regiments were similarly dressed, the only difference being in the colour of their facings.

To these six, three regiments belonging to the “Royal Lusitanian Legion” were added, and in 1811 three more regiments were raised, bringing up to twelve the total number of regiments of *Caçadores*. According to Portuguese authorities all twelve were dressed in the same shade of brown. The three regiments of the Lusitanian Legion wore jackets of ivy green until they joined the Portuguese *caçador* regiments.

It may be asked how or by what means these numerous rifle corps were armed? As we have seen, upon the first raising of the Rifle Corps in 1800, a British weapon, the Baker rifle, was tried and selected. The various corps of foreign riflemen in our Army as well as the “Rifle Companies” of our British Volunteers both before this and for some years afterwards were armed with rifles of different patterns chiefly made on the Continent. It is not an easy matter to trace the source of firearms obtained by contract, but the following proves that prior to 1800 rifles were being obtained from abroad. “On 20 May 1798, Mr. Crew had approved the pattern of a rifle barrel musket, of foreign fabric, and 2,000 stand of the same had been ordered to be procured for the volunteers.”¹ Up to the year 1804 it had been the custom for the British Government to give out contracts to private firms of gunmakers to provide muskets or rifles. It was due to this that in 1800 a contract was given to Ezekiel Baker

¹ W. O. Entry Books S. of S. Series II, No. 147, p. 173.

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to arm the Rifle Corps. But in 1804 this was changed and an Assistant Inspector appointed at the Tower under whose supervision the Government commenced to manufacture its own small arms.¹ In the six years 1804-1809, about 13,000 rifles were thus made.² Of these over 2,000 went to arm the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Rifles raised in 1805 and 1809. The King's German Legion and the Portuguese Caçadores³ no doubt received their quota as did the rifle companies belonging to the various corps on active service abroad. It is also certain that a number were issued to British Militia Regiments and Corps of Volunteers⁴ which had rifle companies at this period. In 1814 the Royal Denbigh Militia alone had 380 rifles and swords and no muskets or bayonets.⁵ In the following year the Annual Inspection Returns show that the Royal West India Regiment had 254 rifles, 984 muskets and 10 "fusees" (*sic*) whilst the Royal York Rangers, also in the West Indies, had 202 rifles, 1,077 muskets and 36 "fusils." Other Corps had a smaller proportion of rifles, thus the 1st Ceylon Regiment had 60 and 1,018 muskets and the Bourbon Regiment 73 and 484 muskets.⁶ In a "Return of Arms in Store at the End of the War" the Select Committee of Finance reported that at that time there were no less than 14,000 rifles in the Magazines of the Ordnance.

¹ See Part I, 45.

² "Return of Arms fabricated in England and received into the Magazines of the Ordnance from 1 April 1803 to 31 December 1809." Clode II, 232.

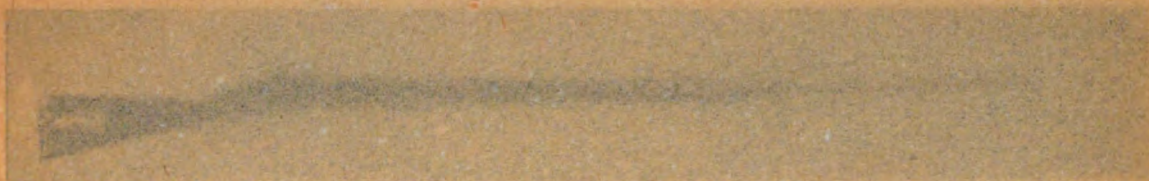
³ Major Botelho tells me that there are several rifles in the Royal Artillery Museum in Lisbon which from their marks are undoubtedly of British manufacture.

⁴ H. J. Blanch in "A Century of Guns" mentions several of these Corps, namely, "Duke of Cumberland's Sharpshooters" (1803), "Manchester Rifle Regiment" (1804), "Cambridge University Rifles," etc. Mr. H. H. Harrod in his collection of arms has among his rifles some marked "Tenting (Essex) Volunteers" "Clerkenwell Volunteers," etc.

⁵ Inspection Report, 11 June, 1814.

⁶ From a Return of "Complement of Rifles and Muskets at the Annual Inspections in 1815."

Baker rifle with triangular bayonet fixed to front of the rifle barrel. 1845.
Total length with bayonet fixed, 5 ft. 10 in.



Baker rifle with triangular bayonet fixed to front of the rifle barrel. 1845.
Total length with bayonet fixed, 5 ft. 10 in.



Smooth-bore musket with triangular bayonet fixed to front of the barrel. 18th century and first half of 19th. Total length with bayonet fixed, 5 ft. 10 in.



(TOP) Bayonet for musket, length 21½ in. (MIDDLE) Bayonet for rifle, length 21½ in.
(BOTTOM) Sword-bayonet for rifle, length 27½ in.

THE BAKER RIFLE AND SWORD-BAYONET.

in 1803 the Rifle Corps. In 1804 this was changed and the Riflemen were transferred to the Tower under whose inspection the Riflemen were to manufacture its own small arms.¹ In 1805 the first 10,000 rifles were thus made.² Of these 10,000 rifles 1,000 were sent to the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the Rifles which were then in the West Indies. The King's German Legion and the Portuguese Legion also received their quota as did the rifle companies belonging to the various corps on active service abroad. It is also certain that a number were issued to British Militia Regiments and Corps of Volunteers³ which had rifle companies at this period. In 1814 the Royal Denbigh Militia alone had 100 rifles and swords and no muskets or bayonets.⁴ In the following year the Annual Inspection Returns show that the Royal West India Regiment had 254 rifles, 984 muskets and 10 "fusils" (i.e. pistols) whilst the Royal York Rangers, also in the West Indies, had 100 rifles, 1,077 muskets and 36 "fusils." Other Corps had a smaller proportion of rifles, thus the 1st Ceylon Regiment had 60 and 1,073 muskets and the Bourbon Regiment 73 and 484 muskets.⁵ In a "Return of Arms in Store at the End of the War" the Select Committee of Finance reported that at that time there were no less than 14,000 rifles in the Magazines of the Ordnance.

¹ See Part I, 45.

² "Return of Arms fabricated in England and received into the Magazines of the Ordnance from 1 April 1803 to 31 December 1809." Clode II, 271.

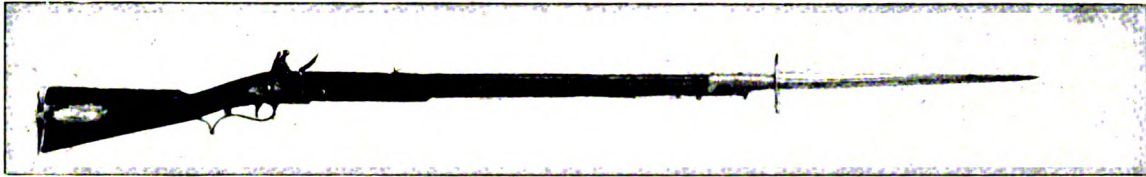
³ Major Lodge tells me that there are several rifles in the Royal Artillery Museum in London which from their marks are undoubtedly of British manufacture.

⁴ Major Lodge in "A Century of Guns" mentions several of these Corps, namely: "The 1st of Cumberland's Sharpshooters" (1801); "Manchester Rifle Regiment" (1802); "Cambridge University Rifles," etc. Mr. R. H. Maitland in his collection of arms has among his rifles some marked "Teutonic (Scott) Volunteers" "Cambridge Volunteers," etc.

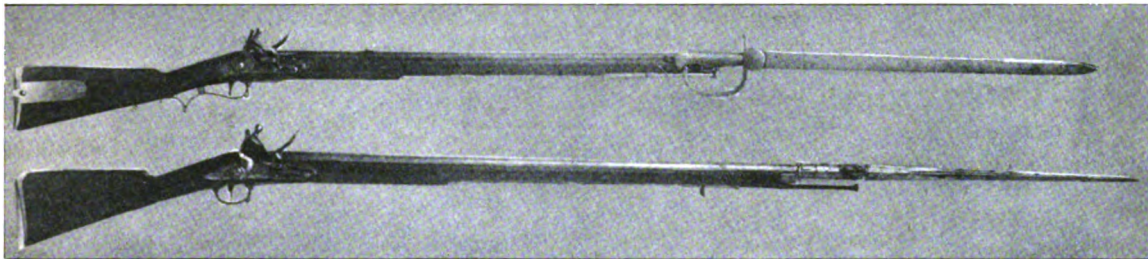
⁵ Ordnance Report, 11 June, 1814.

⁶ Table A Return of "Complement of Rifles and Muskets at the Annual Inspection, 1815."

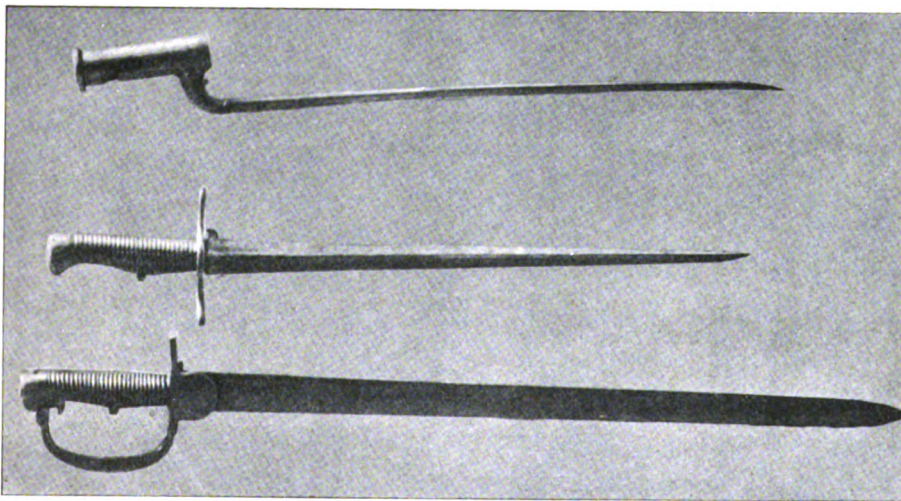
Baker rifle with triangular bayonet, first issued to The Rifle Corps, 1800.
Total length with bayonet fixed, 5 ft. 4½ in.



Baker rifle with flat-bladed "sword" bayonet, issued to The Rifle Corps about 1802.
Total length with sword fixed, 5 ft. 10½ in.



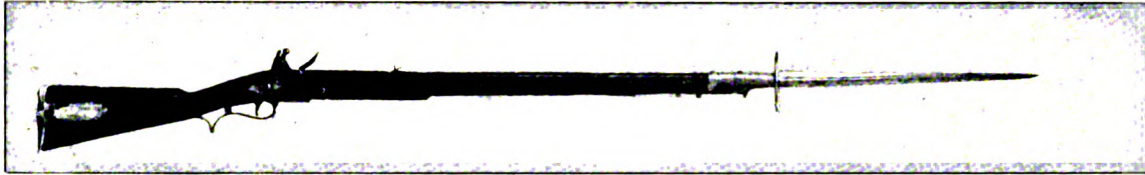
Smooth-bore musket with triangular bayonet, used by the British army during 18th century and first half of 19th. Total length with bayonet fixed, 6 ft. 0½ in.



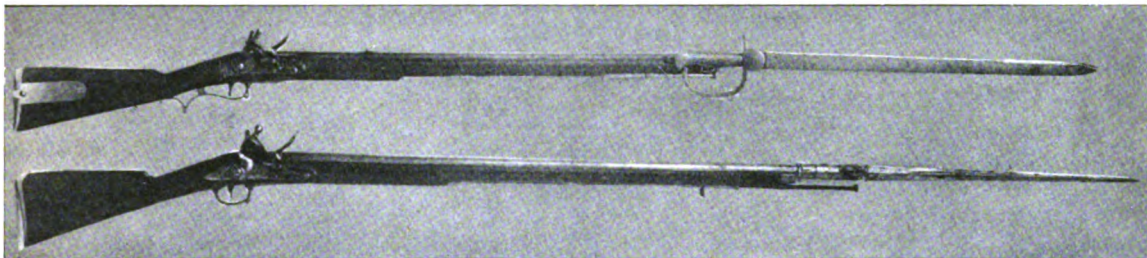
(TOP) Bayonet for musket, length 21½ in. (MIDDLE) Bayonet for rifle, length 21½ in.
(BOTTOM) Sword-bayonet for rifle, length 27½ in.

THE BAKER RIFLE AND SWORD-BAYONET.

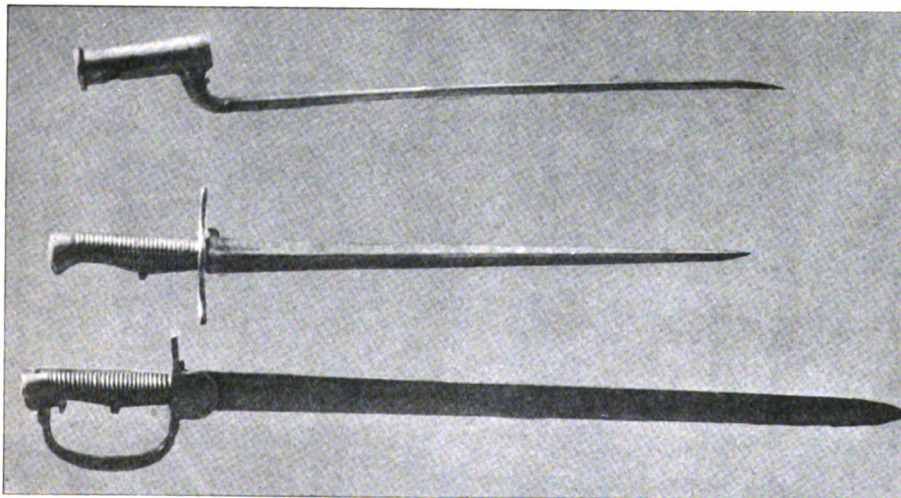
Baker rifle with triangular bayonet, first issued to The Rifle Corps, 1800.
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(TOP) Bayonet for musket, length 21½ in. (MIDDLE) Bayonet for rifle, length 21½ in.
(BOTTOM) Sword-bayonet for rifle, length 27½ in.

THE BAKER RIFLE AND SWORD-BAYONET.

Development of Rifle Fire in the Army, 1800—15 15

I have gone into this matter of the rifle corps in our Army at this period of our history at some length as during the campaigns in Portugal and Spain and at Waterloo some of these battalions of foreign riflemen will be found turning up now and again in our story. Two of the battalions of Portuguese Caçadores as we have seen were incorporated in the Light Division. The 5th Battalion 60th as is well known and also the Brunswick Oëls were broken up and companies posted to different brigades to act as sharpshooters. The remainder usually served as complete battalions in various brigades.¹

¹ Oman IV, Appendix XX, also Atkinson's "List of brigade and divisional organization of the Peninsular Army," reprinted in *Wellington's Army*. Appendix II.

CHAPTER II.

THE WALCHEREN EXPEDITION, 1809.

The inception of the Expedition—Napoleon's attempt to overawe Austria—Austrians invade Italy and Bavaria—Napoleon attacks Austria—British Government decides on an attack on Flushing—General strategy of the Campaign—Strength and composition of the British Force—The British Fleet and transports—Antagonism between our soldiers and sailors—The general topography of the Scheldt below Antwerp—The plan of Campaign—The Expedition sails—The 2nd Battalion 95th leaves Hythe—Strength and Composition—It embarks at Deal—The landing in Walcheren—French driven back—The affair of Humbley's piquet—The advance on Flushing—Flushing invested—The British sailors take to skirmishing—Hope lands in South Beveland—Bat occupied—The landing in Kadsand abandoned—The Siege of Flushing—The French make a sortie—The Light Division arrives—Stewart's Brigade lands in South Beveland—Rifleman Jackman's exploit—The French cut the sea dykes and inundate Walcheren—Outbreak of sickness among British troops—The siege batteries open—Surrender of Flushing—The Riflemen in South Beveland—Serious sickness among troops—The French receive strong reinforcements—Chatham decides not to advance on Antwerp—Dissensions between Chatham and Strachan—Appalling increase of sickness—Evacuation of South Beveland—The Rifles re-embark and land at Deal—Great sickness at Hythe—Losses of the 95th—Withdrawal from Walcheren—Immense number of sick—Total Casualties in Army—Heavy death roll—Chief reasons for the failure—Anxiety caused to Napoleon—William Stewart's notes and criticisms on the Expedition—Far-reaching effects of the "Walcheren fever."

THE Walcheren Expedition is generally classed among the many ill-advised and objectless expeditions upon which the British Army was despatched during the first decade of the Nineteenth Century. Ill-advised it assuredly was in so far that the chances of failure were so great from geographical and climatic causes alone that nothing but the

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most perfect organization and rapidity of action, favoured by fine weather, could have ensured its success. As it chanced, all these factors were wanting and the result was a failure considered from every point of view. But the expedition was by no means so objectless a move as it is popularly supposed to have been, for the general strategy which prompted it was fairly sound, since it was part of a great although ill-considered and worse-arranged scheme to check Napoleon's attack on Austria.

When Napoleon bid our Riflemen adieu at Astorga on 3 January, 1809, and started back for Paris he had ample reasons for his return.¹ So far as Spain was concerned his presence was no longer needful, for as we have seen, the Spanish Armies had been defeated on all sides and dispersed and the only British Army was in full retreat before the overwhelming force he had called up to crush it. But he had information that Austria was preparing for another trial of strength, further, his quondam ally, the Emperor of Russia, was by no means inclined to stand in Austria's way. Added to this there was a conspiracy brewing in Paris to oust him from the throne. At the outset Napoleon endeavoured to over-awe Austria with a hint that he had 400,000 men ready to launch against her. It was now that England entered into an alliance with Austria against France on the general agreement that she should subsidize Austria and should employ her own forces wherever she thought fit; Spain, Italy, or Northern Germany being suggested. Early in April the Austrians invaded Italy and defeated a French force. A few days later the Archduke Charles with the main Austrian Army invaded Bavaria but Napoleon defeated him at Eckmühl, drove him back, and entered Vienna on 13 May. The Archduke Charles however held on to the Danube and Napoleon experienced a check at his hands at Aspern and Essling.

¹ He however delayed his departure from Spain for over ten days for reasons which have never transpired. Wellington's view was that "he was not so sure of victory." (*Croker Corres.*, vol. i, p. 354.)

Meanwhile the British Cabinet had decided during the month of March to send Sir Arthur Wellesley back to Portugal and on the 24th considered the advisability of despatching some 15,000 men to the Island of Walcheren to take Flushing where a French Fleet of 20 line-of-battle ships, some ready for sea and others under construction was known to be. Twenty thousand men were ordered to Portugal to reinforce the 11,500 still there. I shall follow the movements of this force under Wellesley in the next chapter and for the moment deal only with the expedition to Holland.

See Inset
on Map
XIII,
page 42.

The news of Wellesley's success at Oporto on 12 May, followed soon after by that of Napoleon's severe check at Aspern and Essling on 22 May, seems to have put life into the British Cabinet. They had already received reports that Napoleon had denuded the Low Countries and Northern France of troops and on 21 June finally decided to send a combined naval and military expedition to Holland. It was indeed a delicate operation, for on the eastern flank lay Prussia whose conduct in 1805 had not been forgotten and who might at any moment declare for Napoleon and attack the British force. But the move was so far strategically sound in that it would prevent Napoleon from drawing off from Holland and Northern France any more troops to reinforce his main Army and, should Prussia throw in her lot with England, their combined forces might advance and threaten the French line of communications at Strasburg. The immediate objective, the capture of Flushing and destruction of the French Fleet, was in keeping with the well-accepted maxim of England to seek out and destroy any shipping which might assist in a descent on our coasts. It was reckoned that 10,000 men would suffice to hold Flushing and that the remainder would be free to act as circumstances might direct. It is obvious that this division of our strength between Portugal and Holland, whereby we were strong at neither point, was against the broad elements of sound

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strategy. Further that, even admitting the desirability of aiming a blow at France in Northern Europe, it would have been wiser to wait until some more definite object presented itself and some better idea could be formed of the amount of support we might reckon upon obtaining from the countries Napoleon had subjugated.

It was the old story of the British Cabinet who in the exuberance begot of our sea-power could not rest until they "did something" with it. The orders and counter-orders sent to Sir John Moore when in Sicily in 1808 will be recalled. Fortescue summarises the situation exactly when he says that "The Expedition to Walcheren is merely one of a hundred examples of the hopeless inadaptability of the British Constitution to War."

The chief command was given to Lieut.-General Lord Chatham. Preparations were carried out vigorously, the soldiers were newly clothed and equipped and transports hired. The embarkation commenced in the middle of July at Portsmouth, and the force embarked consisted of 37,066 Infantry, 2,950 Cavalry, 3,234 Artillery, and 573 train, or a grand total of 43,933 all ranks,¹ with over 6,000 horses and a siege train of 70 cannons and 74 mortars.

It was by far the largest body of troops which had ever left England in one body. The Infantry were divided into six Divisions. In the Light Division commanded by Lieut.-General the Earl of Rosslyn there were two Infantry Brigades. In the first of these, known as the Light Brigade, under Major-General Hon. W. Stewart (the organizer of the Rifle Corps) were the 2nd Battalions of the 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry and the 2nd Battalion, 95th (Rifle) Regiment. The other Brigade consisted of the 1st and 2nd Light Battalions of the King's German Legion. A Cavalry Brigade composed of the 3rd Dragoons, the 12th Light Dragoons, and the 2nd Hussars

¹ Embarkation Return, July, 1809, Adjutant General's, 12 Feb., 1810.

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King's German Legion completed the Light Division. The Naval force was placed under Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Strachan and consisted of 35 line-of-battle ships, 23 frigates and corvettes, and over 180 sloops, gunboats and small craft.

The soldiers were conveyed in 352 transports making with the 264 ships of war a grand total of 616 sail. It was obvious that a combined expedition undertaken on so vast a scale required peculiarly good Commanders and above all a thoroughly good understanding between the two Services. It is significant how in every account published as well as in letters of this period there is ample evidence that this is exactly what was lacking, from the lowest ranks upwards. There is no denying the fact that at this period the antipathy between the two Services was very great. Our sailors, having swept the seas of our foes and practically wiped them out at Trafalgar, were irritated at the apparent incapacity of the soldiers to do likewise on shore. From the highest ranks down it was the custom to look upon the Army as wanting in energy and resource. The soldiers, who had suffered not a little in many of the abortive expeditions, resented this and returned the dislike. Here at least we may congratulate ourselves that such foolish jealousies have happily died out and that our sailors and soldiers have since learnt to pull together in many an eventful campaign.

An officer of the 81st wrote plaintively from Walcheren, "Nothing is so unmanageable as a sailor except by his own officer," and later on he observes regretfully "I should as soon expect a musket to swim as expect a good understanding between soldiers and sailors." This he attributes to "the standing and immortal jealousy of the Army and the Navy."¹ Yet in spite of this, these same "unmanageable sailors" were ever ready and keen to bear a hand ashore when they could be of use as I shall describe later.

¹ *Letters from Flushing*, 1809, 20, 23, 58.

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Antwerp, the main objective of the Expedition, stands near the mouth of the River Scheldt. Fifteen miles below that fortress, at Bat, the river branches into two main channels, the East and West Scheldt, which in turn subdivide into several lesser channels which eventually, after winding for some forty-five miles through a labyrinth of low islands, sandbanks and shoals, reach the sea.

Map XIII,
page 42.

An advance on Antwerp by the West Scheldt was barred about ten miles from the sea by the fortress of Flushing on the right bank and twelve miles higher up by that of Terneuse on the left bank and again twenty miles up by heavy batteries at the point of Bat. Halfway between Bat and Antwerp, the fort of Lillo again barred the way and here the French had closed the river by a boom thrown across it. An advance on Antwerp by the East Scheldt was barred by the strong fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom. Just above Flushing a branch of the Scheldt known as the Veere Gat separates Walcheren from the islands of North and South Beveland.

The task before Lord Chatham, in brief, was to capture or destroy the French ships in the Scheldt, to destroy the arsenals at Flushing, Terneuse and Antwerp, and to render the Scheldt, if possible, no longer navigable by ships of war. The island of Walcheren lying as it does between the two main branches of the river Scheldt was to be subsequently held as a point of strategic importance. The general plan of campaign finally decided upon, since time was all important, was to effect a landing and mask the fortress of Flushing whilst an advance on Antwerp was pressed with all speed.

Owing to the delays of the British Cabinet the French had ample warning of the projected expedition and took energetic steps to construct batteries to oppose an advance. By the middle of May their defences were completed and thenceforward up to the appearance of the British Force in July, we are told that they were looking daily for its arrival. The idea of the British Commander was (1) to seize a

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point on the island of Schouwen, north-east of Walcheren, so as to secure the anchorage known as the Roompot and subsequently to disembark 8,000 men of the 1st Division in North or South Beveland ; (2) To land the 2nd Division (5,000 strong) on the island of Kadsand and to capture the batteries there and thus secure the passage of the southern channel of the West Scheldt opposite to Flushing ; (3) To disembark the 3rd Division (12,000 men) at Zoutelande on the south-west coast of Walcheren and capture Flushing. After this the remaining two Divisions, one of which was Rosslyn's with our Riflemen, were to land at Sanvliet below Lillo and to advance on Antwerp.

It was a fairly good scheme but based as will be seen on very imperfect knowledge of the topography and navigation of the Scheldt and of the adjacent country as well as of the defences and the numbers and position of the enemy.

It is unnecessary to follow out in detail all the difficulties and delays which ensued.¹ The first complication was caused by a report that the French Fleet, which had been moved up to Antwerp, had dropped down the river to Flushing. Thereupon Strachan ordered No. 2 Project, the landing of the 2nd Division at Kadsand, to be postponed and directed that No. 3 Project should be so far amended that the landing should be made on the north-west in place of the south-west coast of Walcheren.

The British Fleet sailed on the 27 July and after a fourteen hours' run anchored in the Steen Deep, about eight miles off the coast of Walcheren on the 28th. It blew so hard on that day and on the

¹ Most of the details here given are taken from the Quarter-Master General's Journal of the Expedition. I am indebted to Colonel Gerald Boyle for much information collected by him many years ago from this Journal and from the Blue Books on Walcheren, the Embarkation and Casualty Returns, the Ship's Logs and Muster Books (2nd series), all of which he has been at great pains to consult and verify.

29th that it was impossible to land on the north-west shore of Walcheren. On this day it was discovered that the Roompot was so far from the island of Schouwen that there was no necessity to land troops upon that island at all. Hence the first project of the general scheme was likewise abandoned. Sir Home Popham (the originator of the Buenos Ayres Expedition) thereupon induced Strachan to seek the more sheltered anchorage of the Roompot, and Strachan on the 30th anchored off Breezand at the northern entrance to the Veere Gat. Owing however to a heavy south-westerly gale and an adverse tide no landing could be commenced until 5.30 p.m. when two Infantry Brigades with a brigade¹ of light Artillery under Lord Paget were embarked in boats and pulling into the Veere Gat landed a mile west of the Fort of Ten Haak.

I must now follow the moves of the 2nd Battalion of the 95th Rifles which was selected to form part of the expedition. In the last chapter I described how after their return from the Coruña Campaign the ranks had been filled ; our men now received fresh clothing and accoutrements as well as many new Baker rifles. The strength of the 2nd Battalion upon embarkation was fifty officers, seventy Staff and other Sergeants and Buglers, and 988 Corporals and Private Riflemen.

Eight companies marched out of Hythe Barracks under Lt.-Colonel Hamlet Wade on 17 July and 500 rank and file embarked at Deal the same day in the *Superb*, 74, and 295 in the *Hussar*, 38-gun frigate. Two days later they were shifted to the *Namur*, 74, and the transport *Langley*. About this time Captain Miller's Company was sent to act as light troops with Sir John Hope's Reserve Division and another Company was detached in a similar capacity to the Marquis of Huntley's 2nd Division. On 22 July William Stewart notes in his diary, " My Brigade this day finally arranged on shipboard as follows : 43rd, *York* ; 52nd, *Serapis* ; 95th, *Namur*." ² After eight days' delay the

¹ A 6-gun battery.

² *Cumloden Papers*, 56.

Brigade sailed for the Scheldt on the 30th and anchored in the Roompot the same evening.¹ Some of the log books of the men-of-war employed in conveying our men give full information both as regards the names of officers and of the numbers embarked. Thus in the log of the *Superb* we find that four companies under Captains Miller, Hart, Duncan, and Grantham, with nine 1st Lieutenants, three 2nd Lieutenants, twenty-three Sergeants, six Buglers and 431 rank and file were embarked on the 17th and were transferred to the *Serapis* on the 20th.²

Other ships, such as the *Hussar*, apparently viewed the soldiers much as they would a cargo of sheep and curtly record how on the 17th they "Received 414 soldiers on board at Deal," and how on the 18th they "sent 197 soldiers on board *Amethyst*" no mention being made of regiment or corps.³

A point which will strike anybody who studies these old logs is the amazing number of transfers of men of various corps from one ship to another, which seems to be a regular part of the system of embarkation at this period. It was rare that the men of a battalion put to sea in the ship in which they had originally embarked. Another point of interest affecting the Regiment is the large establishment of subalterns allowed in the Rifle Corps and the consequent number of officers, no less than fifty of all ranks, accompanying the 2nd Battalion to Walcheren.⁴ At this time it was customary to give regiments of Light Infantry and Rifle regiments an extra subaltern to every two companies presumably to ensure a sufficient quota of officers when on detached duties.

It was less than five months since the Battalion had returned from the Coruña Campaign. In the interval a number of recruit officers had joined and among them John Kincaid who has left us a vivacious description of the march of the 2nd Battalion from Hythe Barracks to Deal, when "in order to impress the minds of the natives he carried a

¹ Captain's Log of the *Namur*, vol. 1978.

² Log of *Superb*, vol. 1954.

³ Log of *Hussar*, vol. 3459.

⁴ Return, Adjutant-General's Office, Feb. 12, 1810

donkey-load of pistols in his belt and screwed his naturally placid countenance up to a pitch of ferocity beyond what it was calculated to bear."¹ Readers of this delightful book will recall his account of the voyage across channel and of the classic encounter between the officer of Marines and the Midshipman.

But in addition to the eight Companies which embarked on 17 July at Deal under Colonel Wade, two Companies of the 2nd Battalion 95th, namely Captain Daniel Cadoux's and Captain Jenkins', with four Lieutenants, three Second-Lieutenants, an Assistant-Surgeon and 215 Non-commissioned officers and men, the whole under Major Amos Norcott² were detailed for duty with Lord Paget's 4th Division. They embarked at Portsmouth on 16 July in the *Dryad* a 36-gun frigate and joined the Brigade under de Rottenburg in the Downs on the 28th.³

This Brigade consisted of the 68th, 1st Battalion 71st and the 85th, all Light Infantry Regiments, and a brigade of guns R.A. On the morning of 30 July, the *Dryad* was running along the shore off East Kapelle, the Rifle Corps, Marines and Seamen getting ready to land. At 11.30 a.m. she anchored. At 6 p.m. the troops landed east of Breezand and the adjacent forts opened an ineffectual fire which our ships returned. De Rottenburg's Brigade formed part of Lord Paget's Division and upon landing formed the left flank of his line, the Riflemen acting as a covering force, the men being in light marching order. The disembarkation was effected without difficulty, the Fort of Ten Haak firing a few shots at the boats without effect.

The orders were for de Rottenburg to advance on the land side of

¹ *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*, Kincaid.

² It is a matter of some Regimental interest that these two Companies of the 2nd Battalion were from this time forward employed on a variety of separate services under Major A. Norcott during the years 1809-10 and 1811 in Spain and Portugal until they finally rejoined the Head Quarters of their Battalion in the 2nd Brigade of the Light Division at Alameda in the autumn of 1812.

³ *Dryad*. Captain's Log. Vol. 2270. *Muster Roll*, Series II, vol. 1380.

the fort and, wheeling round, to take it in reverse. Our men pushed forward through some sand dunes and had a little skirmishing with the French sharp shooters in a belt of wood which they cleared, capturing a few prisoners. The French now abandoned the fort, spiking four 24-pounder guns out of the seven it was armed with. Colonel Pack (whom we last met at Buenos Ayres) with half of the 71st occupied the fort capturing two more guns and pushed half his battalion on towards Veere.

Chatham himself landed at Ten Haak and passed the night there, our Riflemen taking up a line of outposts some distance to the south. It was during this night that an officer in charge of one of our advanced piquets, by name Lieutenant William Humbley, was informed by a peasant that a party of French soldiers were at that moment plundering his house. Humbley with great promptness, suspecting that while intent on plunder the look-out would not be very good, at once took with him a Corporal and eight men of his piquet and under the guidance of the peasant, the night being very dark, made his way to the house about 200 yards from his post. They moved in perfect silence and arrived at the place without a "qui vive" from the only sentry there posted. Him a Rifleman knocked down at once with the butt of his rifle, the others instantly surrounded the house and made prisoners the whole party consisting of two Sergeants, two Corporals and twenty Privates. The officer in command of it alone escaped by getting out of a back window in the darkness of the night. The Riflemen broke the whole of the muskets of the French piquet and conveyed their twenty-four prisoners into the British lines and forwarded them to Head Quarters.¹

About midnight Pack supported by the 36th pushed on to Veere and attempted to rush the place but was driven back with a loss of thirty-five men.

¹ Humbley's letter, January 31, 1838, in Adjutant-General's Office (Cope).

After Paget's Division had got ashore the boats returned and landed the two brigades under General Graham and throughout the night the disembarkation was pushed on vigorously and Artillery, stores and horses were landed. Next morning (31st) Lord Chatham ordered an advance in three columns. The two Companies of the 95th were broken up and a proportion assigned to each of these columns. The left wing moved forward to capture Veere which was heavily bombarded by our gun-boats, half the town being laid in ruins. With this column were fifty of our Riflemen to act with the advance guard. The right wing under Graham covered by a small party of thirty-one of our Riflemen and two companies of the 68th Light Infantry pushed across the island halting at nightfall at Meliskerke only five miles north-west of Flushing, their patrols entering Zoutelande, the point originally selected for debarkation. The centre column under Paget, which Chatham accompanied and with whom were 120 of our Riflemen and eight companies of the 68th and 85th Light Infantry under de Rottenburg, reached Grypskerke about six miles north of Flushing and the reserve marched to St. Laurens two miles from Middleburg. Meanwhile Veere was hard pressed and during the night about half the garrison, some 200 men, escaped in boats to Flushing and at 4 a.m. on 1 August the place surrendered after a gallant defence. The whole force now advanced; Graham moved by Zoutelande to Nolle on the western side of Flushing where he took up a good position with his right on the river. The country traversed is described as being thickly covered with small stunted copses and intersected in every direction by dykes, ditches and rivulets.

Paget pushed on to within a mile of Flushing. He had a slight skirmish on the road at Koudekerke and at West Sonburg the French again stood but were attacked by de Rottenburg. The enemy fell back and were pursued somewhat rashly right up to the gates of Flushing, the 68th and 85th losing four officers and ninety men killed and wounded

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whilst the small detachment of Riflemen had one officer, Lieutenant Humbley, one Sergeant and ten Riflemen wounded. About 200 prisoners were taken as some set off to these losses. Meanwhile the reserve column advanced through Middleburg which had opened its gates on the previous day and at Abeele they found the enemy holding a breast-work and abatis with three guns. The French were driven out by the Light Companies with the loss of a gun and a few prisoners, the British halting at East Sonburg two miles north of Flushing. The left wing similarly advanced from Veere on Middleburg and, detaching a force to invest the little fort of Rammekens, reached Ritthem three miles east of Flushing, thus completing the investment of that fortress. These very successful operations had cost the British two officers and fifty-four men killed and twenty-one officers and 224 men wounded.

Of these losses a considerable proportion had been caused by the fire of the French sharpshooters during the advance of our columns across the island. It is curious how rarely any reference is made in contemporary accounts to the presence of riflemen among the French opposed to us but that some of these sharpshooters were armed with rifles is shown by the writer of the "Letters from Flushing" who describes how the French from their superior local knowledge made full use of the stunted timber and bushes and that from such points of vantage they constantly picked off our men. "It had even become dangerous to pass anything in the shape of a tree." In this service of covering the front and of clearing the brushwood of the enemy in our advance across the island our Riflemen, of whom there were only 200 all told, were greatly outnumbered by the French sharpshooters, but they received a welcome and unexpected reinforcement from the Bluejackets who took to skirmishing with enthusiasm. "You can scarcely form any adequate opinion of the gallantry of our seamen even when employed upon the land service. . . . The seamen of the Gun brigs of their own free-will undertook the service of clearing the bushes

and have performed it so effectually that the Frenchmen are now quiet. Our brave Tars make a sport of this dangerous service. Their only reward has been the spoil which they have taken, and there are few of them but have a *rifle-gun*, a dirk, or some other article of a similar kind to produce as a proof of their courage and success. I must not forget to mention by the way that the French sharpshooters infinitely exceed our own and that they seem to set more value on them.”¹

So much for Chatham and the landing in the island of Walcheren. Hope had meanwhile on 1 August landed 2,500 men in South Beveland near Kattendyke and on the following day he ordered Captain Miller’s Company of the 95th Rifles and 160 men of the Guards to push across the island. The garrison of Bat finding their defences thus taken in reverse abandoned them and, after spiking their guns, evacuated the island. Hope thereupon occupied Bat. The fort was subsequently armed by the British and put into a good state of defence.

So far so good. But the trouble was that successful as were these operations the attack on Kadsand, which had been postponed on 24 July owing to the rumoured approach of the French fleet had been still further delayed. Commodore Owen’s Squadron with the 2nd Division had been anchored off Blankenberghe some ten miles west of Kadsand since 28 July on which date the island was only held by some 1,800 men. But the weather was so bad and so heavy a sea was beating on the shore that landing was out of the question and it was not till 31 July that the weather moderated, by which time the enemy’s force had been increased to 4,000 men and on that day it rose to over 6,000. Owen was now ordered by Strachan (*not* by Chatham) to abandon all idea of landing the 2nd Division on the isle of Kadsand and to bring it to the Roompot.

This failure to seize Kadsand may be said to have ruined the

¹ *Letters from Flushing.*

chances of success of the whole expedition, for at the time it was believed that, until Flushing could be captured and the Northern Channel up the West Scheldt thus made available, access to Antwerp was barred by the batteries on Kadsand which commanded the Southern Channel.

Chatham now occupied himself entirely with the siege of Flushing from the land side, his heavy siege Artillery was landed at Veere and dragged with incredible labour by teams of soldiers across the soft and muddy country, the roads being at places too narrow. By 3 August our heavy guns opened on Rammekens and it surrendered the same night. Major-General William Stewart notes in his diary "The Companies of the 95th under Major Norcott were said to be particularly serviceable in the reduction of this place."

Now although Rosslyn with the Light Division had anchored in the Roompot on 30 July it was not until 5 August after the fall of Rammekens that he was ordered to proceed to the anchorage in the Sloe Channel. The two Light Battalions of the King's German Legion were now landed and on the 6th marched to take part in the siege of Flushing, with them went one Company of the 95th Rifles making the fifth thus temporarily detached. The same day Lord Huntley with the 2nd Division returned from the abortive attempt to land at Kadsand and anchored in the Veere Gat.

The siege of Flushing was pushed with vigour. During the next few days the French, taking advantage of the absence of our ships, passed reinforcements of over 3,000 men across the Scheldt from Kadsand thus raising the garrison of Flushing to nigh 8,000 men. On the 7th about 4 p.m. the French made a sortie with 2,000 men and strove to dislodge Graham's advanced party of some 600 men. They delivered their attack with great determination but after two hours' sharp fighting were driven back. The British casualties were fourteen men killed, eight officers and 133 men wounded. The Royal

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Scots, the 5th, and three companies of the 35th were engaged and some of our Riflemen as well as some of those of the German Legion "shared in the peril and honour."¹

During the siege operations in Walcheren a Company of the 95th with some of the Riflemen of the King's German Legion were employed in covering the approaches. Harris in his "Recollections" has described how upon one occasion a Rifleman of the 95th named Jackman got close up to the walls of the Fortress and scooping out a rifle pit with his sword, took cover in it and opened fire deliberately on the French Artillerymen serving the guns. He is said to have picked off no less than eleven of them as they showed themselves from time to time at the embrasures. After which he jumped up and running across the open under heavy fire from the enemy rejoined his company on the advanced trenches unhurt.²

On the 10th it was noticed that the water in the ditches of Walcheren was rising and it was discovered that some of the sea-dykes had been cut ; (this by order of Napoleon.) The weather meantime had become broken and rain fell continually. Our men were often at work up to their knees in water owing to the rising of the inundation. It was now that sickness broke out among the British troops in Walcheren and increased daily to an alarming extent. Men were struck down by dysentery and fever on all sides and it was found necessary to relieve the sentries hourly ; so sudden were the attacks

¹ *Letters from Flushing*, 61. Sir William Cope in his History has inadvertently confused this fight with the one on 1 August when we drove the French into Flushing.

² *Recollections of Rifleman Harris*, 131. There are three men in the Muster Rolls of 1809 of the name of Harris serving in the 2nd Battalion in the Walcheren Expedition. By means of the medal roll (1848) I have identified the writer of the *Recollections* as Private Benjamin Harris of No. 7 Company (Captain Gardiner's). The Muster Rolls show that Rifleman Thomas Jackman was left in Spain in hospital during Moore's campaign but that he rejoined the 2nd Battalion at Hythe and served in Walcheren in No. 1 Company (Captain Cadoux's).

that men had often to be carried off parade. By the 12th the number of deaths was so great that orders were issued that all burials should be made by night and without lights.¹ The siege works were, despite all these difficulties, pushed forward and on the afternoon of 13 August the British batteries opened fire from fifty-seven heavy guns. Some frigates had run the gauntlet of the Flushing and Kadsand batteries two days earlier and anchored above the town and seven line-of-battle ships lay off Dishoek below Flushing. The fire of our batteries was supported by our gun-boats; the French replied and dismounted two of our guns but by nightfall some of the Royal Scots had made a lodgement in the western side of the defences and the town was set on fire in several places. At daybreak on the 14th the bombardment was renewed and the heavy French batteries were silenced including those on the seaward side.

Our line-of-battle ships now came on the scene and fired into the town and by two p.m. the French fire was almost entirely subdued. At six p.m. Chatham summoned the garrison to surrender but as the reply was not deemed satisfactory, fire was reopened about ten and an hour later Pack attacked and captured one of the French advanced works on the eastern side. At two a.m. on the 16th the French General Monnet offered to surrender and soon after daylight the British took possession of the gates of the town.

The total losses of the British forces during the siege (30 July to 17 August) was 738 killed, wounded and missing. No fewer than 5,800 French troops surrendered with the fortress, another 1,800 had been captured or had deserted to us prior to its fall and it is reckoned that the whole affair cost the French not less than 8,000 men. The losses during the siege among our Companies were two Riflemen killed, and three officers, Lieutenants H. H. Manners,

¹ *Letters from Flushing*, 120.

W. Humbley and W. C. Clarke, six Sergeants and twenty-four Riflemen wounded.

During the siege of Flushing Hope, as we have seen, had occupied South Beveland and fortified Bat. A few days later a French flotilla which attacked Bat was driven off; Popham now sailed up to Bat. On 9 August the remainder of Rosslyn's Division was landed in South Beveland at a point opposite to the village of Arnemuïden. With Stewart's Brigade were the 43rd, five Companies of the 95th and a battery of Artillery. The landing commenced at daylight and was completed by eight o'clock. Every man carried two days' cooked rations. The advance guard of a Company of Riflemen and the brigade of guns marched off at ten. A severe gale and downpour of rain on the 7th had been succeeded by a particularly hot spell of weather and Stewart describes how his "men suffered from the great heat and although marched at the rate of ninety paces per minute, many were left sick by the side of the road." The Brigade entered Goes about two o'clock having only covered eight miles in the four hours. The 43rd were cantoned at Goes and Kloëtinge about a mile beyond and the 95th at Wemeldinge four and a half miles further on. "The 95th did not enter this quarter until nearly six o'clock, the heat and late inactivity on shipboard having enervated them and caused many to lie speechless on the sides of the road."

As regards the island of South Beveland Stewart writes :—

"Nothing can exceed the goodness of the roads or the richness of the country through which our whole march was conducted. The country is of one low level, and excepting that it is well wooded resembles the richest parts of the Isle of Ely, not a spot which is not cultivated and laid out in rich corn, beans or pasture . . . and for comfort and cleanliness nothing can exceed the houses of the poorer orders. The partiality or rather *bon-homie* which the inhabitants showed to our troops was very striking . . . After seeing the

95th into their quarters, I returned to my friend the burgomaster of Kloëtinge and took up my quarters at his spacious and truly comfortable house."¹

On the 10th, the Company of Riflemen which had been with Lord Huntley's Division joined headquarters (as did the 52nd) and the following day, Captain Miller's Company also rejoined from Sir John Hope's Division, both were cantoned at Kattendyke.

On 11 August comes the first hint of any unhealthiness of the islands Stewart remarking on "the innumerable canals and ditches overgrown with weeds, or the water of which is stagnant," says that "agues the worst sort everywhere prevail, if we remain here another month in this part of the world we are given to expect that one third of our Army will speedily become non-effective." He adds "at a gentleman's house at Graven Polder I learned that of seventy French Hussars who were there quartered last year, thirty only were fit for duty in the course of six weeks halting there, and that a large proportion died." Ten days later, he notes the arrival of Baron de Rottenburg's Brigade from before Flushing."² The two Companies under Major Norcott joined the Battalion at Wemeldinge. No mention is made of the return of the Company detached at Walcheren, but that it did return about this time is shown by the Pay Lists.

After the surrender of Flushing on 16 August steps were at once taken to push on towards Antwerp. Five days later no less than three Divisions with some Cavalry were assembled in the eastern end of South Beveland ready to move forward. On the 24th Chatham moved his headquarters to Bat and two more Divisions and some Cavalry were at this time in transports opposite that fortress. Popham was sent on the following day to select a landing place near Sanvliet.

¹ *Cumloden Papers*, 57.

² Stewart's *M.S. Diary* (in possession of the Earl of Galloway). There are many extracts from this in the *Cumloden Papers*.

The French meanwhile had flooded the country west of Antwerp and about Bergen-op-Zoom and had withdrawn their fleet above Antwerp and were known to be receiving daily strong reinforcements.

It was at this juncture, when success still seemed possible that the troops in South Beveland were struck down with miasmatic fever. On the 20th some 1,600 men were on the sick-list and every subsequent day added scores and hundreds to the roll. By the 27th there were 3,467 sick and the next day they amounted to 4,000. At this period it was estimated by those most capable of forming an opinion that Chatham, after making the necessary deductions for occupying Walcheren and South Beveland as well as for observing Bergen-op-Zoom and performing other imperative military duties, would have only 10,000 men left wherewith to attack Antwerp. The strength of the French at Antwerp, Bergen and Breda was now reckoned at 33,000. Under these circumstances Chatham with the full approval of his Divisional Generals decided that any further operations were useless and that he would fall back.

Now it was that Strachan ranged himself in opposition to Chatham. It would be unprofitable to follow out the details of this controversy. Suffice it to say that on 28 August Chatham decided to evacuate South Beveland, leaving Sir Eyre Coote with seven brigades of Infantry to hold the Fortress of Flushing and occupy the island of Walcheren. On 29 August the captured guns were embarked and the enemy's works demolished. On 1 September the re-embarkation commenced. On this day there were 4,000 sick on shore, and the hospital ships were full. Two days later the sick amounted to 8,000. On the 5th the last of the troops left South Beveland.

We must now return to the unfortunate 2nd Battalion, 95th. On 27 August Stewart reported that the Companies of the 95th in South Beveland showed a daily increase of twenty sick. On 31st he embarked ninety sick at Kattendyke and notes that "173 of the less

serious cases of the 95th were left on shore." He also mentions that "the average sick in South Beveland alone was on this day nearly 5,000."

On 1 September four Companies (numbering only 281) of the 2nd Battalion embarked on board the *Ulysses* off Wemeldinge and three days later the remainder were sent down in Dutch *schuyts* from Wemeldinge to the *Salsette* and *San Fiorenzo* frigates, which were lying off Kolensplaat; 358 men were transferred on the 10th to the *Sceptre* in which ship and the *Ulysses* they returned to Deal, arriving about 16 September.¹

The condition of the men upon disembarking was deplorable and many were unable to perform the return march to Hythe barracks. The Muster Rolls well show the shattered condition of the Battalion at this period. Many men's names are noted as "left at Deal," others as "left at Dover" or "in Regtl. Hospital."

In the Muster Roll for 16-24 September, Major Norcott, three Captains, nine Subalterns, sixteen Sergeants, twenty-three Corporals, five Buglers and 382 Riflemen are shown as "sick." In this brief period twelve died. Later on the "Purveyor" at Deal reports that five Sergeants, four Corporals and 108 Riflemen who had been left behind there had been sent to the General Hospital. On the other hand the casualties in action, as recorded during this most unfortunate expedition, were but small. Only one man died in Walcheren and one deserted.

Unfortunately the evils arising from the malarial infection to which our troops had been exposed did not diminish with their return to England. Thus on 12 February 1810 no fewer than five Sergeants and 128 Riflemen are shown as having "died at Home" between 16 September and that date. At this time there were 161 men in hospital whilst at the end of the month there were still 140.

Only one officer of the Rifles (Lieutenant Edmund Bourke) died.

¹ *Ulysses*. Captain's Log, vol. 1918. Naval despatches, North Sea, Admiralty. f. 1, vol. 562.

Unquestionably the small losses from fever of the Regiment whilst on the expedition was due to its not having been detained to form part of the garrison of Walcheren in September, October and November, but the mischief was already done and Rifleman Harris has left us a gloomy account of how, when he himself came out of hospital at Hythe he saw long rows of the graves of his comrades who had succumbed to the effects of the pestilential climate.¹

Thus it was that for a second time within the space of a year the 2nd Battalion was reduced by the hardships of campaigning from an effective of over a thousand, to temporary inefficiency.

Meanwhile the force left as a garrison in Walcheren was equally stricken, one Regiment, the 23rd Fusiliers, not having a man fit for duty! On 9 September, the sick, including those sent to England, amounted to 10,948 men. Of the 18,000 left in Walcheren no less than 7,396 were in hospital on 11 September, and by the end of the month 1,000 deaths had taken place and there were 9,000 men sick. "Our men, even such as are in health, have the features of so many walking corpses," thus wrote an officer on 30 August. During October things went from bad to worse and on 12 November the states showed 4,900 sick and only 4,500 fit for duty!

Napoleon was all this time taking active steps to recapture Walcheren. Orders were at last sent by our Cabinet to evacuate the island and on 9 December the last of the force was embarked. Only 111 British soldiers had been killed in action, but over 4,000 had died of disease, and of the 33,000 survivors on 1 February 1810 over 11,500 were in hospital.

The total losses of the troops engaged in the Expedition amounted to :—

¹ *Recollections of Rifleman Harris*, 263.

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Killed in action	7 officers	104 men.
Died in Walcheren	43 officers	2,186 men.
Died at Home	20 officers	1,969 men.
	—	—
	70	4,259

It is not my intention to discuss at length the causes of failure beyond saying that a careful study of the conditions all point to the fact that owing to the lateness of the start the task set both Army and Navy was an impossible one. Setting aside the extraordinary physical obstacles to be overcome, the shoals and shallows, the adverse tides and unfavourable winds when afloat and the intricate country, dykes, streams and marshes when ashore; the fortifications were both numerous and formidable and it is highly probable that even had everything come off as arranged and our Army appeared before Antwerp on 4 August, Chatham would have had only about 18,000 men at his disposal with which to attack a fortress held by an almost equal number.

It is some consolation to recall that unsuccessful and disastrous as was the expedition it gave great alarm in Paris and caused Napoleon no little anxiety as can be seen by his correspondence of this time.¹

It is always of interest to learn the views of competent soldiers on a military situation of which they have personal knowledge and more especially when such opinions have been written down from day to day at the time of the events described. In William Stewart's journal during the Walcheren Expedition many side-lights are thrown which coming from so good and skilful a soldier are worthy

¹ General Pelet in his *Mémoires sur la Guerre de 1809 en Allemagne* (p. 328), describes how Napoleon was for a time deceived by the British preparations for the Walcheren Expedition and believed that the true objective was Spain. He adds that had this British force been at Talavera "Les affaires de la péninsule étaient terminées, et pouvaient amener des grands changemens en Europe."

of attention. From these notes it is evident that from the first inception of the expedition Stewart had misgivings as to its wisdom. On 23 July when in the Downs he writes : "Went to Ramsgate this day, and was shown plan of intended operations by Lord R. (Rosslyn) ; the numerous objects in view, a general division of the force to five points an alarming feature, worthy of deep consideration. Also of the Navy not being able to penetrate beyond Fort Lillo." On 14 August he writes from South Beveland "We found Sir R. Keats and Sir H. Popham at Bat planning whether it was possible to make any attack upon any part of the enemy's fleet or flotilla above Lillo—the result of their enquiry and consultation was that nothing more could be done by the Navy than hold their present anchorage at the mouth of the united Scheldt and that the rest of the operation must now depend upon the army on shore."

And on 22 August "From all that I can hear I understand Lord Chatham is anxious for the attempt upon Antwerp but that not one general officer is of opinion that the measure is now advisable. For my part I never liked the scheme *ab origine*, upon the plain military principle, that it was composed of so many projects that an Army of 40,000 men was too much broken up with separate corps to retain strength on any one point, and more particularly on the main point, Antwerp." When on 29 August the retirement commenced he writes "thus has begun our retreat from a position within 15 miles of the object of our grand expedition, an object which the measures that were adopted were not calculated to attain *ab origine* and which the very slow mode in which we were obliged to conduct matters from our first setting foot on these shores has little tended to bring to a favourable issue."

Regarding the decision to retain possession of the island of Walcheren Stewart writes in his diary of 9 September : "Every reason, military, political and medical militate against our retention of that

dearly bought island for many months when will close the worst-judged and the most expensive expedition which our country ever detached, an expedition which consisted of nearly 100,000 fighting men, seamen and soldiers included, and which no military man of experience, whom I met with during the short campaign (if worthy of being so called) had a good opinion of *ab origine*—'twas founded on false principles for land operations, and was the child of naval projectors, rather than military sound-heads whose opinions ought decidedly to lead, at least upon the formation of all projects where military men are to be the principal *actors*. That our Government was ignorant of the channel between Flushing and Kadsand and of the necessity of *all* ships passing within gunshot of the former, consequently the capture of Kadsand could not be of avail—that they were ignorant of the defences of the town of Antwerp and more particularly that they were ignorant that the dockyard of Antwerp with the mass of men-of-war were at the south-east of that town and immediately *commanded by the citadel*, a citadel the capture of which I almost venture to assert that we were unequal to overcome under any circumstances—are facts so true, by all accounts, and so singularly descriptive of bad judgement, that it does not appear to be too presumptuous for any military man to assert that according to the plan of Government—the *expedition neither could or would have succeeded at any time*.

“That Lord Chatham would act indolently every one knew would happen but that his indolence lost the business, I do not believe. His prudence probably kept the Army latterly from total discomfiture, and I among others therefore feel not a little obliged to his Lordship. He will however be the *scape goat* of our Cabinet, upon this occasion.”

The disastrous results of Walcheren were by no means confined to the failure of the expedition and to the loss of seventy officers and over

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4,000 British soldiers. Numbers of men were rendered permanently unfit for service and it took months and in some cases years to restore others to an effective condition. One direct result of this, so far as concerns the Rifle Corps, was that the 2nd Battalion was not considered medically fit to proceed to the Peninsula in 1810 and it was only as the sickly men were eliminated and the Companies in succession became effective once again that they were sent singly or in pairs to join Wellington's army in Portugal.¹ This was done gradually both in the case of the Companies of the 2nd Battalion and of the 3rd Battalion which had also a heavy percentage of sick at this period, apparently drafted into it from the 2nd Battalion. By this means Brigadier General Robert Craufurd's Light Brigade was eventually built up into the famous Light Division which carried all before it during the five years of fighting in the Peninsula and France about to be described.

Since no medal or clasp was awarded for Walcheren, there is no accessible record of the names of those of the Regiment who took part in the expedition. A list of officers is therefore given at the end of this chapter ;² among the names will be seen many of those who subsequently served in the Peninsular campaigns and at Waterloo.

¹ During the year 1811 several corps which had served in Walcheren were sent out as reinforcements to Portugal. The men of these suffered most severely from fevers and agues. In October there were no fewer than 14,000 British soldiers in hospital. In Wellington's correspondence of this period there are frequent allusions to the ill-effects of the Walcheren fever on men exposed to the torrid heat and autumnal rains of the Peninsula. Thus on 2 October, 1811, he writes from Freneda to the Rt. Hon. W. W. Pole, "the troops have been very unhealthy, almost all the newly arrived troops having gone to hospital with Walcheren fevers, &c." (Supp. Desp. VII, 221.

He eventually wrote home representing that not another unit which had been in Walcheren might be sent out to him.

² I am indebted to Colonel Boyle for this list.

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NOMINAL LIST OF OFFICERS OF THE 2ND BATTALION 95TH RIFLES WHO SERVED IN THE WALCHEREN EXPEDITION, 1809.

Lieutenant-Colonel.

Hamlet Wade.

Majors.

A. G. R. Norcott.

G. Wilkins.

Captains.

Daniel Cadoux.

Joseph Logan.

John Jenkins.

Valentine Grantham.

George Miller.

John Duncan.

Thomas Drake.

Wm. Percival

Thomas S. Beckwith.

(Brigade-Major to

John B. Hart.

Major-Gen. W. Stewart).

Lieutenants.

Edmund Burke.

Walter Death Bedell.

William Booth.

Samuel Patrickson.

Francis Edmonstone.

William Humbley.

Andrew Wade Pemberton.

Henry Herbert Manners.

Walter Clerke.

John Charles Hope.

Charles Eaton.

Thomas Cochrane.

Wm. Sinclair Robertson.

John Robert Budgen.

Nicholas C. Travers.

Second-Lieutenants.

Cunningham Ogilvie.

Francis Dixon.

Archibald Stewart.

John Hopwood.

Edward Oxen.

Jonathan G. Forster.

Richard Bruin Freer.

Dugald Cameron.

Joseph Austin.

James M. Stokes.

William Lister.

John Kincaid.

John Gardiner.

Alexander M'Gregor

Henry Llewellyn.

Christopher Croudace.

Paymaster—Samuel Bridge.

Adjutant—Boyle Travers.

Quartermaster—Donald Ross.

Surgeon—Daniel Maclean.

Assistant-Surgeons—Thos. Hughes Ridgway ; Charles Horner Cotton.

WALCHEREN EXPEDITION

WALCHEREN EXPEDITION

CHAPTER III.

THE DOURO CAMPAIGN, 1809.

THE situation in Portugal after Coruña—Sir John Cradock's difficulties—Formation of the two "Battalions of Detachments"—The 95th supply the "1st Rifle Company"—Sir Arthur Wellesley's scheme for defence of Portugal—The Military situation in the Peninsula in the Spring of 1809—Wellesley organizes his force—His system of employing Riflemen as skirmishers discussed—The formation of the "1st Rifle Company"—Wellesley advances from Coimbra—The French driven from the Heights of Grijo—Soul's dispositions at Oporto—Wellesley forces the passage of the Douro—Losses in this operation—Wellesley calls attention in a G.O. to "the activity and conduct of the 95th" and mentions our Riflemen in Despatches—Pursuit of Soul—His line of retreat cut off—He in consequence destroys his artillery and baggage and retreats through the mountains—Wellesley pursues and drives him across the frontier—Comparison of Moore's and Soul's retreats.

WHILST the abortive Campaign amid the marshes of Holland described in the last chapter was in progress, events had been moving rapidly in the Peninsula. The situation there in January 1809 when Moore's Army re-embarked at Coruña was briefly as follows :—

Lieut. General Sir John Cradock who had been sent out to Lisbon in December 1808 to take command of the troops left behind in Portugal by Moore most loyally sent every man he could spare to assist him, keeping back only about 4,000 men. When however it became clear that he could be of no further use to Moore he recalled the troops on the march to join him and made such dispositions as were possible with the small forces at his disposal, some 11,500 all told, to defend Portugal. Cradock was now in a most difficult position and the orders he received were of the most bewildering nature. On 12 January, after

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embarking three Battalions for Vigo he learnt that Moore was in retreat and further that two Battalions he had ordered to advance from Almeida to join Moore had been obliged to fall back on Oporto. About this time he received orders that the troops at his disposal were to be employed anywhere in the Peninsula "where most advantageous." It was now that he received a request from Sir George Smith at Cadiz to send troops to defend that important fortress and port. Upon this he sent three Battalions by sea to Cadiz and ordered one to march by Seville to the same place. By this means he weakened his small force by some 4,300 men. Shortly afterwards he was joined by three Battalions which had been left at Oporto. With these Battalions came about 3,000 men from Oporto and other places, invalids and stragglers from Moore's Army. For the Rifle Brigade the sudden appearance of this motley crowd of men of different regiments, who for various reasons had become detached from their corps, is of peculiar interest since later on they were formed into the two "Battalions of Detachments" which did such good service on the Douro and at Talavera¹. One of these Battalions, known as the 1st Battalion of Detachments was supplied with a "Rifle Company" composed exclusively of men of the 95th Rifles.

It would be beyond the scope of this story to describe the chapter of accidents and confusion of these months or the difficulties and troubles of Cradock. Our Government suddenly sent out about 4,000 men to Cadiz under General Sherbrook. These as well as the four Battalions which had been sent to Cadiz by Cradock were

¹ Sir William Cope makes mention of Talavera on p. 45 but not of the Douro. I was led to investigate the services of the 95th Rifles at Talavera by finding the names of men of the Rifles in a medal roll at the War Office in 1893. I should add that I had long before this seen the repeated mentions of the good services of the 95th at the passage of the Douro by Wellesley in his Despatches, but did not then pursue the subject further, since I was assured that none of the 95th Rifles were in Portugal in May 1809 and that the "mentions" were obviously misprints.

refused permission to land by our Spanish allies, who had traditions of the seizure of Gibraltar in 1704 ever before them. Suffice it to say that both forces returned to Lisbon on 12 March. Great efforts were meanwhile being made to raise a Portuguese Army. On 7 March Sir Arthur Wellesley (at the time in England) who was consulted by Castlereagh, wrote a memorandum in which he gave his opinion that if 20,000 British troops were to be supported by 70,000 Portuguese (regular and militia) it would require 100,000 French to conquer Portugal, adding that if Spain continued to resist it was unlikely the French could spare such numbers. Also that until the Portuguese Army was resuscitated, 30,000 British troops would be required. The truth of this military forecast was singularly verified by results.¹ Before the end of March, the British Cabinet had decided upon sending out Wellesley to replace Cradock and with him 5,000 Infantry and 3,300 Cavalry, making with the troops already in Portugal over 26,000 men. Wellesley sailed on 15 April and on the 22nd arrived at Lisbon. Thus at last he found himself in supreme command in the Peninsula, a command he was never to relinquish until he had driven the French out of Portugal and Spain and carried the British Army into the heart of France five years later.

Before describing the steps Wellesley took to organize and marshal the disordered fragments of an Army which now came under his command, I will outline the general Military situation in Spain and Portugal at the time of his arrival. In January 1809, the Spanish Armies had one and all been defeated and dispersed. Deprived of Moore's aid, Romana's "Army of the Left" beaten at Zornosa had sought safety in the fastnesses of Galicia. The "Army of the Centre" thrice defeated, had broken up into three fragments, the

¹ A description of this episode will be found in Fortescue, VII, 128, and is worthy of close study since it disposes of the oft-quoted assertion that whereas Moore said the Portuguese frontier was indefensible, Wellington said the reverse.

Aragonese going to Zaragoza, the Estremadurans to the south of the Tagus and the Andalusians to Cuenca. The "Army of the Right" alone for a time had managed to keep in check the invaders in Catalonia.

Turning now to the French dispositions, Napoleon's orders for the final subjugation of the Peninsula were issued on 17 January and were briefly as follows. Soult, as soon as he had driven Moore's Army to their ships, was to turn south and seize Oporto and then push on to Lisbon. Victor was then to advance through Estremadura on Lisbon, and Lapisse's Division at Salamanca was to move on Abrantes and assist Soult. Lisbon occupied, Victor was to move southward with 40,000 men and subdue Andalusia. Zaragoza having been captured, the troops around it were to stamp out all resistance in Aragon and Valencia. It all sounds simple enough but Napoleon had not reckoned either on the determination of the Spaniards to resist or taken into consideration the extraordinary topographical difficulties of their country, which caused so many of his best laid schemes to fail.

We will now see how far this programme was carried out. During Moore's Campaign St. Cyr, who had come with reinforcements from France, captured Rosas and Barcelona, and before the end of February had temporarily crushed all opposition in Catalonia. In January Victor had attacked and defeated the Estremadurans at Ucles near Aranjuez and caused the Andalusians to withdraw south, whilst in February Zaragoza was taken by Lannes after one of the most heroic defences known to history. Cuesta now advanced to Almaraz on the Tagus and King Joseph ordered Victor who was at Talavera to drive him back. This Victor did and upon Cuesta retreating, followed him up and defeated him at Medellin on 28 March, and occupied Merida on the Guadiana above Badajos. Here he halted awaiting news of Soult's progress towards Lisbon from the north.

We must now follow out Soult's movements after his severe check

before Coruña. On 19 January the town was surrendered to the French under circumstances not very creditable to the Spanish defenders. Soult thereby obtained abundant provisions and also some heavy guns. Four days later he marched on Ferrol, a fortified place easily capable of defence lying only 15 miles north-east, held by 10,000 Militia and 4,000 or 5,000 sailors and where, among other supplies, were some 20,000 British muskets recently landed. The Governor like his comrade in arms at Coruña surrendered in the most pitiful manner after a weak defence of only twenty-four hours, thus abandoning the splendid harbour as well as a squadron of ships lying in it to the victorious French.

Now it was that Soult received Napoleon's orders to march on Oporto and Lisbon, the dates specified for his arrival at the first being 5 February and for the second, the 16th. The task was not easy, his men had suffered severely during the advance on Coruña and were in a most destitute condition, whilst the country between Coruña and Vigo was almost roadless and pack animals were a necessity. The hostility of the natives made it impossible for foraging parties to go far, since all small detachments were set upon and murdered. But excepting from such sporadic warfare no serious opposition was probable, the remains of Romana's shattered force having fallen back on the Portuguese frontier before Ney. On 30 January Soult marched south, his cavalry occupied Vigo and crossed the Minho into Portugal on 2 February. A week later his infantry followed but on reaching the Minho found the passage commanded by the guns of Valença. Soult thereupon marched down the right bank to the sea and attempted to cross near the mouth of the river in fishing boats on the 16th but was prevented by floods and by the determined opposition of the armed peasantry and so returned upstream to the bridge at Orense. Owing to the badness of the roads he was obliged to leave his heavy guns behind at Tuy and he pushed on

See Map
XIV,
page 58

with only twenty light pieces. He reached Orense on the 21st, some of his Divisions having to fight their way through the swarms of partisans in the hills. At Orense he halted for nine days to collect supplies and repair damages. It was now that he heard from Ney of a general rising in Galicia and asking for help. Soult however decided to push on to Oporto as ordered by the Emperor. This he did in spite of a desperate resistance offered by the gallant Portuguese at every point, who on 20 March made a regular stand near Braga but were defeated and some 4,000 of them slain, and seven days later Soult arrived in front of Oporto. Here all was confusion for although the Portuguese had some 30,000 men and 200 guns mounted in strong entrenchments they had no leaders. Soult stormed Oporto on the morn of the 27th and the soldiers and inhabitants panic-stricken rushed to the river where the bridge was broken. Some 8,000 were killed or drowned, the French losing only 500 men. Oporto was sacked amidst the usual scenes of violence and slaughter. Meanwhile the Portuguese levies had captured Chaves and thus cut Soult's line of retreat northward on Galicia and on the 28th some British frigates aided by the Galicians recaptured Vigo. Soult had indeed forced his way through the Portuguese but the lines by which he had advanced were absolutely closed. Meanwhile although Victor was at Merida, Lapisse, who was at Salamanca with 9,000 men, in place of advancing on Abrantes as ordered, after sundry erratic movements eventually joined Victor at Merida. Soult was thus completely separated from Ney on the north-east and from Victor on the south-east, and so ended Napoleon's projected combined advance on Lisbon. Such then was the military situation when Wellesley reached Lisbon in April.

The force Wellesley had available of the British troops and King's German Legion upon taking his command was as follows :—

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Cavalry	-	-	-	-	4,858
Infantry	-	-	-	-	20,965
Artillery	-	-	-	-	1,235 with 30 guns
Two Battalions of Detachments					1,880
					<hr/>
					28,938
					<hr/>

Added to these were about 16,000 Portuguese troops making a grand total of about 45,000.

Wellesley had now to decide whether he should attack Victor at Merida or Soult at Oporto. If the former, he might reckon upon the assistance of Cuesta who with 25,000 men was between Merida and Seville. But the difficulties of transport were great and, further, his orders were to defend Portugal. For these and other reasons he decided upon moving first against Soult and then to return south to attack Victor. Leaving a small force of 5,000 British and 7,000 Portuguese to hold the line of the Zezere on the Tagus and thus keep an eye on Victor, he ordered a concentration of his troops at Coimbra where between 2 and 4 May he reorganized it, forming a Cavalry Brigade and nine Infantry Brigades. It was now that he allotted a Portuguese Battalion to each of five of his Brigades and at the same time broke up a half-battalion of the 5th Battalion 60th Regiment and posted one company of riflemen to five of the Brigades leaving the other half-battalion intact with the 3rd Brigade. The two Brigades of the King's German Legion provided their own companies of riflemen in the manner already described. Thus it was that eight Brigades out of the nine were supplied with a quota of German riflemen. The remaining Brigade, the 6th, being supplied by a party of men of the 95th Rifles from the 1st Battalion of Detachments. This allotment of a proportion of riflemen to act with each Brigade is of some interest and in recent years an attempt has been made to discover in it a new departure in tactics and

more especially in Wellesley's tactics.¹ This however is not the case, as all who have read this History know well. So far as regards tactics in general, I have shown how the development of rifle fire and riflemen was a gradual one dating from many years back. But from the first day our British Rifleman ever met the enemy they were thus employed. The Rifle Corps at Ferrol, the 95th at Monte Video and later, both at San Pedro and in Craufurd's advance on Buenos Ayres, were invariably thrown forward to "cover the front" with skirmishers and thus protect the formed bodies of troops in their rear from the fire of the enemy's light troops. Wellesley from the first day he had command of British troops in European warfare had consistently employed riflemen for such a purpose. In Denmark in 1807 he had allotted five Companies of the 95th Rifles to each of his two Brigades, and when he attacked the Danes at Kjöge with one Brigade, he extended the five Companies of the 1st Battalion to cover the Infantry line advancing in echelon behind it (see Part I, p. 124). Again at Roliça in the following year he covered the front of his left attack with the 95th and the 5th Battalion 60th, and at Vimeiro he used four Companies of the 95th and the 5th Battalion 60th to cover Fane's Brigade and two Companies of the 95th to cover Acland's Brigade. On one and all of these occasions, Wellesley was well satisfied with the work of the riflemen, as is shown by his Despatches quoted in this book. It is not then surprising that on the next occasion when he had command of a force, as in 1809, he should apply and develop his principle of meeting the

¹ Fortescue (vii, 151 *note*) says, "Mr. Oman was the first to discover and point out this most important feature in Wellington's tactics." Whilst admitting that Mr. Oman has done good service by the admirable way in which he has described this habit of the Duke of Wellington's to cover the advance of his brigades with rifle fire, I cannot admit for one moment that the talented Oxford Historian "discovered" a fact which had always been known to many soldier students of the Peninsular War and which, so far as the Rifle Brigade is concerned, has been handed down among them as a cherished regimental tradition of their services under Wellington, dating from Denmark in 1807.

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fire of the enemy's skirmishers, whenever possible, by rifle-fire in addition to the musketry fire of his light infantry. The practice of arming light companies with rifles and of establishing rifle companies was extending at this time throughout our Army, especially in the Colonies, as has already been described.

This brings us to the formation of the two Battalions of Embodied Detachments. When Moore marched on Salamanca in October 1808, he left behind him a number of sick and convalescent at Lisbon, men who had served in the Vimeiro Campaign. Among them were a few of our Riflemen.¹ Later on the number of men thus detached from their Regiments and Corps was augmented by sick and stragglers during the advance into Spain, and again later on by some who having been taken by the French had made their escape or had been released by Spanish partisans, until on 18 February 1809 there were twenty-six of the 1st Battalion and thirty-one of the 2nd Battalion making a total of fifty-seven fit for duty.²

On 25 January 1809 this mass of unattached men belonging to various Regiments was formed into two Battalions under the name of the "1st and 2nd Battalions of Embodied Detachments." After many years of search, I came upon the Muster Rolls and Pay Lists of the 1st Battalion from the time of its formation in January until it was finally broken up in July after Talavera when the men rejoined their respective corps. The 1st Battalion was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Bunbury of the Buffs and consisted of detachments from ten different Regiments including the three which were subsequently formed into the Light Brigade.

¹ Ration Returns. Lisbon, 12 Nov. 1808.

1st Batt. 95th, 1 Sergeant 6 R. and F.	} Convalescent.
2nd Batt. 95th, 2 Sergeant 15 R. and F.	

² Parliamentary Paper. Return of Convalescents fit for service at Oporto and Lisbon, 18 Feb. 1809.

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The Pay List in April is styled "Muster Roll of the 1st Company of the 95th Rifle Regiment," and contains the names of seven Sergeants, three Corporals and forty-two Riflemen and is signed by "Thos. Munro, Lieut. 42nd Regt. commanding," for neither at this or at any time were there any officers of the Regiment with the Detachment of Riflemen. The 2nd Battalion of Detachments was commanded by Lt.-Colonel Copson of the 5th Foot.¹

The survivors of the small detachment of Riflemen who served in the Douro and Talavera campaigns joined the 1st Battalion on its arrival at Talavera.²

On 7 May Wellesley marched northward, his advance guard being formed of the 14th Light Dragoons, a battery of Artillery and Brigadier-General Richard Stewart's Brigade consisting of the 1st Battalion of Detachments, the 1st Battalion of the 16th Portuguese Regiment and the 29th Foot. Thus our Riflemen once again found themselves in the van. Beresford with about 6,000 men was sent on 6 May along a parallel road so as to seize the passage of the Douro at Lamego and thus threaten Soult's line of retreat into Spain, whilst Wellesley with his force divided into three Divisions under Edward Paget, Hill and Sherbrooke respectively, advanced on Oporto. The total force was 16,000 British and 2,400 Portuguese.

Soult who had no idea of the imminence of Wellesley's advance had his forces widely scattered, partly for reasons of supply and partly for strategic considerations. In Oporto he had with him Delaborde's Division about 5,000 strong. Mermet's was pushed nine miles southward across the Douro on the heights of Grijó and was covered by

¹ Unfortunately I have not been able to trace a Muster Roll of this Battalion so cannot say if there was a Rifle Company with it. The title of the company with the 1st Battalion namely, the "1st Rifle Company" would lead one to imagine that there may have been a second.

² Monthly Returns, 25 Sept. 1809.

Francheschi's Cavalry at Albergaria Nova, twenty miles beyond. Loison's Division, 7,000 strong was at Amarante on the river Tamega about thirty miles to the east whilst Lorge's Cavalry was at Braga, thirty miles north of Oporto, keeping an eye on the Portuguese levies.

Halting on the 8th for a day to allow Beresford with the Portuguese to get well ahead on his flank, Wellesley early on the 10th pushed forward his Cavalry under Cotton, supported by Stewart's and Murray's Brigades, direct on Oporto. The infantry of the advance guard consisted of the Rifle Company of the 1st Battalion of Detachments, the two Companies of the 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry and the Light Company of the 29th Foot, the whole under the command of Major Way of the 29th. Cotton with the British Cavalry came in touch with the French at dawn on the 10th, but Francheschi had some infantry with him and Stewart's Brigade was delayed and did not come up for some time ; Francheschi thereupon fell back and joined Mermet at Grijó. On the 11th Wellesley ordered Hill to endeavour to outflank Mermet's position on the east whilst he with Paget's Division advanced. In the afternoon the Light Companies of the 1st Battalion of Detachments attacked Mermet but met with a stiff resistance and lost not a few. Wellesley now ordered the King's German Legion to turn the French left and the 16th Portuguese to turn their right and with the rest of Stewart's Brigade renewed the attack on the wooded heights in the centre above the village of Grijó. Mermet thereupon withdrew under cover of the 31st Léger, but that Regiment were ridden into by two squadrons of the 16th and 20th Light Dragoons and about 100 prisoners taken. The British loss on this day was two officers and nineteen men killed and six officers and sixty-three men wounded with sixteen men missing. The French loss was reckoned to be about twice as great. Hill was delayed in his outflanking march and took no part in the action. It was a smart and sharp affair and that night our men halted on the heights of Grijó and actually occupied the

tents abandoned by the French. Mermet and Francheschi made good their retreat and crossed the Douro.

Soult was quick to realize the gravity of his position and took active steps to delay Wellesley's advance. He removed all the boats on the Douro to the northern shore and reckoned that with the 12,000 men he now had in Oporto he could hold the river line until he had drawn in his scattered forces, when he would retreat eastward across Traz-os-Montes on Salamanca. Everything depended upon Loison holding the bridge at Amarante. Soult was apprehensive lest Wellesley might use the few boats at his disposal to cross the Douro near its mouth and so sent his cavalry to patrol the river line and kept his infantry in the city. At two a.m. next morning Soult blew up his bridge of boats; the advancing British reached Villa Nova, the suburb of Oporto on the southern bank of the Douro only a few hours later. Owing to the conformation of the ground their arrival was not visible to the French on the northern bank, a high rocky hill crowned by a convent concealing their approach.

Wellesley from this convent which stood 150 feet above the river could see the French troops marching away to the north-east. Exactly opposite to the convent was the Bishop's Seminary, a large building surrounded by a wall which ran down to the river bank both above and below it. This big enclosure was large enough to hold two battalions and was under the close and effective fire of artillery from the convent hill. Colonel Waters, the famous "Intelligence officer" as we should now style him, noticed four large barges lying along the northern shore and with the help of a motley crew consisting of a prior, a barber and some peasants he crossed in a skiff and towed the barges across to the southern shore unmolested and indeed, unseen by the French. He also made sure that the Seminary was not held. When Wellesley received his report he replied in his laconic fashion, "Well, let the men cross."

The first to cross were an officer and twenty-five men of the Buffs who entered the Seminary and closed the gateway on the northern side. A second and a third boatload of soldiers were crossed over before the French became aware of the daring adventure. Meanwhile three British batteries had crowned the convent hill and the remainder of the Buffs were hurried across the river, the gallant Edward Paget being in command. A detachment of all arms had been sent to seize the ferry of Avintes four miles up-stream. By about 11.30 the French had assembled their forces and made a series of furious attacks on the Seminary both from the northern side where they brought up a battery and from the western, where they pushed down their guns close to the river to fire on the crossing barges. Our batteries, however, swept both guns and infantry and our infantry posted behind the Seminary walls kept up a heavy musketry fire. More troops were now sent across until the whole of Hill's Brigade occupied the Seminary. Upon the French leaving the quays to assault the Seminary the populace rushed down and pushed boats across the Douro to the southern bank. Stewart's Brigade now passed over, followed by the Guards, and inclining to the right attacked the French who were attacking the Seminary. The French were thrown into confusion and driven out towards the north-east, losing a battery and many prisoners. Unfortunately the force sent to the Avintes ford was badly handled and failed to co-operate, had it done so the losses of the French would have been tenfold. Our victorious infantry continued the pursuit until nightfall.

The British losses in this most daring and successful affair were only twenty-three men killed and three officers and ninety-five men wounded, extraordinarily small considering the importance of the action and the extreme risks run in such an operation. In the 1st Battalion of Detachments the 43rd lost about ten killed and wounded, the 52nd one officer and six men wounded and four missing; the casualties among our

Riflemen are unrecorded. The total losses in the three days (10th to 12th) were eight officers and forty-three men killed and seventeen officers and 151 men wounded, making with seventeen missing a total of 228 casualties. Fifty-seven guns and two howitzers were taken from the French whose losses in officers and men were about 600 killed, wounded and missing, whilst some 1,000 sick and wounded men fell into our hands in Oporto.

That the Rifles were present and did good service in this most brilliant and decisive little opening campaign of Wellesley's is shown by the following General Order which was issued the same evening as the events just described.

"G.O.

A. G.'s Office,
Oporto 12 May 1809.

The Commander of the Forces congratulates the troops upon the success which has attended their operations for the last four days, upon which they have traversed above eighty miles of a most difficult country, in which they have carried some formidable positions, have beaten the enemy repeatedly, and have ended by forcing the passage of the Douro, and defending the position they had so boldly taken up, with numbers far inferior to those with which they were attacked. In the course of this short expedition the Commander of the Forces has had repeated opportunities of witnessing and applauding the gallantry of the officers and the troops, the activity and conduct of the 95th, and of the Light Infantry of the 29th the 43rd and 52nd."

Again Wellesley in his Despatch to Lord Castlereagh the Secretary of State, describing the fight on the 10th, writes: "We discovered the enemy's advanced guard consisting of 4,000 infantry and some squadrons of cavalry, strongly posted on the heights above Grijó, their front being covered by woods and broken ground . . . the 16th Portuguese Regiment of Brigadier-General Richard Stewart's Brigade attacked their right and the Riflemen of the 95th, and the flank companies of the 29th, 43rd and 52nd, of the same Brigade under

Major Way attacked the infantry in the woods and the village in their centre. . . .”

Later on he requests “attention to the conduct of the Riflemen and of the flank Companies of the 29th, 43rd, and 52nd Regiments under the command of Major Way of the 29th.”¹

Throughout the night and early morning of the 12th Wellesley passed his troops, guns and stores across the river, but he did not follow up Soult until the afternoon owing to the exhaustion of the men. He then pushed on to Vallongo seven miles east of Oporto, Soult being at Baltar about five miles beyond.

During Wellesley's advance Beresford had marched as ordered on Lamego and picked up some Portuguese reinforcements on the way, bringing up his numbers to over 10,000 men. Arriving at Lamego on the 10th he sent Silveira's Portuguese across the Douro four miles beyond, where they fell in with Loison's force moving eastward and retired before it to the entrenched bridge-head at Peso da Regoa. Loison attacked but was driven off and Silveira and Beresford pursued him to Amarante. On the 12th the Anglo-Portuguese troops drove the French across the Tamega river. Now it was that Loison elected to retire towards Braga, thus abandoning the line of retreat through Traz-os-Montes which Soult had ordered him to hold at all costs.

Soult received the bad news of his lieutenant's failure during the early hours of the 13th. His position was indeed desperate. His force was too weak to march westward and attack Wellesley, and if he attempted to move eastward and dislodge Beresford from Amarante he would be most assuredly attacked by Wellesley in rear. He could not possibly cross the Douro and go south. His only chance of escape therefore lay northward through desolate and almost roadless mountains. But Soult was a fine soldier and a most determined man. He at once

¹ Well. Desp. IV, 323, 325, Ed. 1837.

destroyed his artillery, stores, baggage and military chest, put his sick and his musket-ammunition on pack-horses and started off along a mountain track the same night in a downpour of rain. He joined Loison the next morning at Guimaraes and fearing that Wellesley might forestall him at Braga, he ordered all Loison's artillery, baggage and stores to be likewise destroyed and resumed his retreat through the mountains.

Wellesley uncertain of Soult's movements pushed on to Braga, which he reached on the 15th, Beresford marching by Amarante on Chaves.

On the 15th Soult drove the Portuguese from the broken bridge at Salamonde, and after repairing it next day, repeated the operation at the bridge beyond Ruivães where the formidable defile of the Cavado barred his line of retreat on Montalegre near the Spanish frontier. Here although he attacked and carried the bridge with great gallantry, before his rear-guard could be withdrawn across it he was overtaken by Wellesley, who attacked him with some light infantry companies and light guns; the French thereupon broke and ran, casting away their arms, and a great number of men and horses being forced over the bridge into the torrent below were drowned or slain. Nightfall and the continued rain alone saved the remainder from destruction. This was the end of the pursuit. On the 18th Soult reached Orense and on the 23rd he halted at Lugo. Here he found Ney who had been surrounded by thousands of armed peasantry for some weeks and whose men were almost starving.

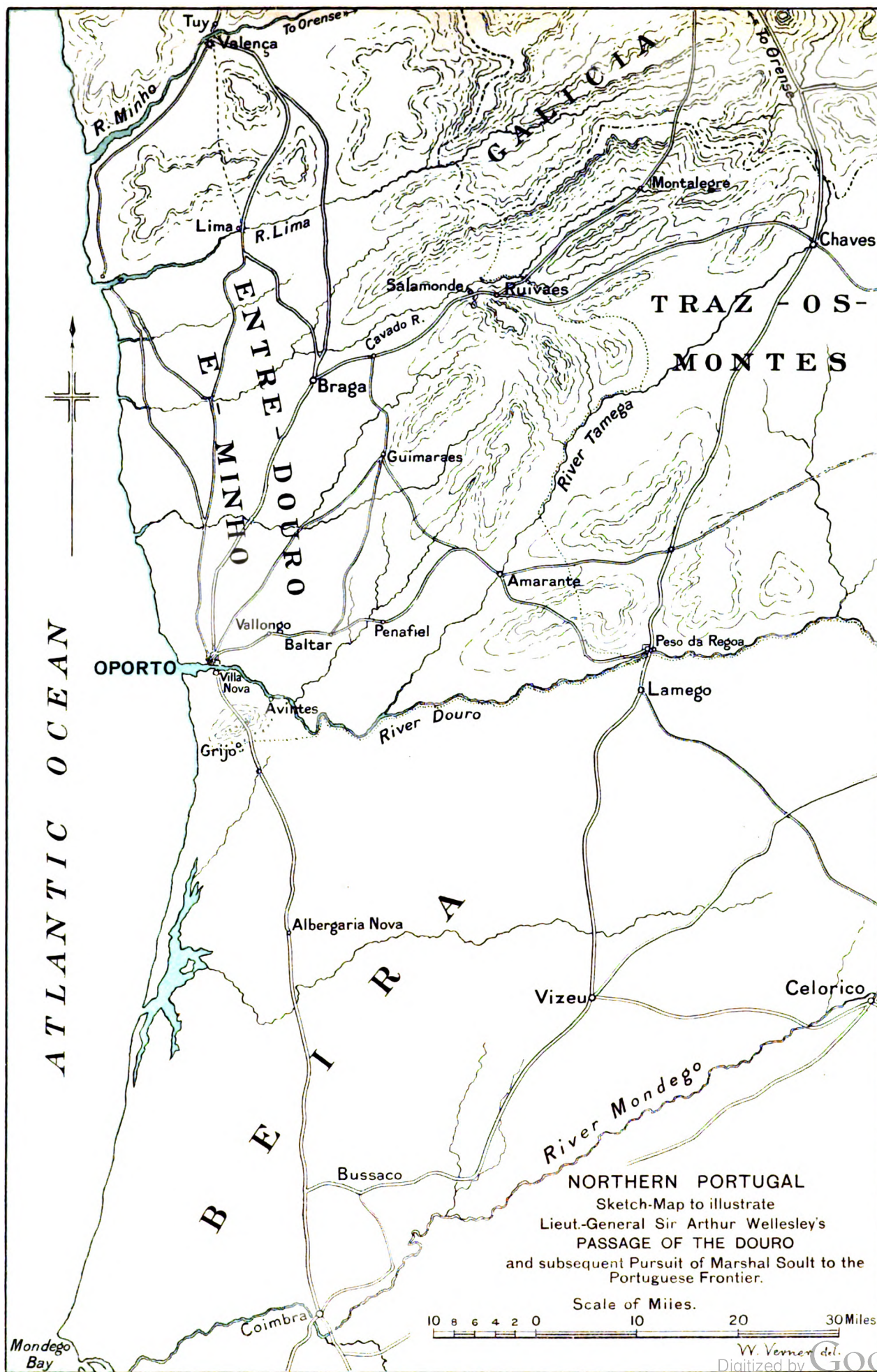
Soult's advance to Oporto had cost him the loss of nearly 6,000 of the 26,000 men he started with. Of these about 2,000 were lost in the retreat through the mountains and although he saved the remainder they were mostly in a desperate condition, many without arms and shoeless. Soldiers at this time and many people since have made comparisons between Moore's retreat on Coruña and Soult's on

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Orense, only four months later, and the state of indiscipline into which both armies alike fell. The great difference between the two retreats would seem to be that whereas the British troops were insubordinate because they were not allowed to fight, the French were disheartened and disorganized by repeated defeats. Fortescue has well pointed out how, although in both instances the Armies became to a great degree mere mobs, Moore's was a fighting mob, whereas Soult's was a flying mob.

What share our Riflemen had in thus harassing and pursuing Soult is not known, but it is not hard to realize that for such a purpose every available rifle would be brought into play. It must have been an intense joy to our gallant fellows who less than four months before were retreating amid the snows of Galicia, wet and frozen, starving and shoeless, and incessantly worried by Soult's attacks, to find themselves now with the tables completely reversed, harrying their old persecutors to death and destruction in terrible weather through the very heart of the mountains. Throughout the pursuit of Soult the rain was torrential and the troops, pursuers and pursued alike, endured incredible hardships. Indeed it was largely owing to this that Wellesley, having driven the unfortunate French over or into the Cavado torrent and across the frontier into Spain, stayed his hand and relinquished the pursuit.

Even Wellesley in a letter home at this period permitted himself so far to unbend as to allude to Soult's change of rôle in the following words :—

“He has lost everything, cannon, ammunition, baggage, military chest, and his retreat is in every respect, even in weather, a *pendant* to the retreat to Coruña. . . . Upon the whole, the enemy has not lost less than a fourth of his Army.”¹

¹ Wellesley to Villiers. Ruivaes, 17 May 1809. Well. Desp. IV. 341, 344.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAMPAIGN OF TALAVERA AND THE FORCED MARCH
OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE, 1809.

Positions of the French in May and June, 1809—The first inception of "The Light Division"—Wellesley's advance from Portugal—Battle of Talavera—Share of the 1st Battalion of Detachments in the fight—The French attack repelled—The Light Brigade arrives on the battlefield "too late" after its famous forced march—Losses of the British in the Battle.

The 1st Battalion 95th Rifles embark for Portugal—Delays on the outward voyage—Arrival at Lisbon—March up country—Craufurd issues his famous "Standing Orders for Marches"—Resentment caused thereby—The daily march routine—Arrival at Naval Moral—Description of the country—The Light Brigade reaches Calzada—Urgent appeal from Wellesley—The Forced march—Oropesa—Arrival on Battlefield of Talavera—Actual distance covered critically examined—The strategic situation after Talavera—Soult, Ney and Mortier cut into the British line of communications—Cuesta retreats from Talavera—Wellesley's retirement to Arzobispo—The Light Brigade guards the Tagus at Almaraz—Lack of rations—"Dough-boy Hill" and the "Valley of Starvation"—Outpost courtesies—The private signals of our Riflemen to the French—Craufurd's increasing unpopularity—Withdrawal to Portugal—Campo Mayor—Winter quarters and winter sport—Great sickness among troops—Inception of the Lines of Torres Vedras.

DURING Soult's Oporto Expedition, Ney had been fully engaged in striving to make head against the Spanish forces in Galicia. He now expected that Soult would assist him but Soult rightly maintained that the true strategic objective was Wellesley's army in Lisbon. It will be remembered that Marshal Victor was at Merida on the Tagus, some forty miles east of Lisbon waiting for news of Soult's advance on that city. His position here was threatened by fresh forces collected by Cuesta in the south and his difficulties of subsistence were

great. It was not until 10 June that he heard of Soult's rout and retreat and then, not from Portugal but from Paris! Such were the difficulties of obtaining information. At last King Joseph allowed Victor to fall back. This he did and on 26 June reached the Alberche, east of Talavera. At this time a corps under Sebastiani was four days march south of Toledo, about fifty miles from Talavera, Soult was at Benavente, Ney at Astorga and Mortier at Valladolid.

On 11 June Sir Arthur Wellesley received permission from the British Cabinet to advance beyond the frontiers of Portugal and at the same time was informed that he would shortly receive reinforcements consisting of a battery of Horse Artillery and a Light Brigade of Infantry under Craufurd, already promised him.

This brings us to the first inception of "*The Light Division*," a name which will be famous among Englishmen so long as the British Empire endures; and the story of its gallant deeds throughout the whole of the strenuous fighting in the Peninsula is practically the story of the exploits of our British Riflemen. Sir John Kincaid, who served in the Rifles during these eventful years, has happily described the ubiquitous duties of the Rifle Brigade as follows "we were the light regiment of the Light Division and fired the first and last shot in almost every battle, siege and skirmish in which the Army was engaged during the war."¹ The nucleus of the Light Division was formed of the 43rd Light Infantry, the 1st Battalion of the 52nd Light Infantry, the 1st Battalion of the 95th Rifle Regiment and a brigade (as a battery of 6 guns was then styled) of Horse Artillery. This was none other than the famous "A" Battery, known as the "Chestnut Troop" under the command of Captain Hew Ross.² These *corps d'élite* embarked on 24 May in the Downs but were detained by gales and foul winds at Portsmouth and did not reach Lisbon until the end of June.

¹ *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade.*

² Afterwards General Sir Hew Ross, G.C.B.

I must now briefly outline the campaign in which they were about to take a share. Sir Arthur Wellesley, who at this time had not had opportunities for estimating the promises of the Spanish Juntas or the reports of their commanders in the field at their true value, arranged that he should advance from Portugal by Castello Branco and Plasencia and thus threaten Victor's line of retreat whilst Cuesta with over 30,000 men moved against him along the south bank of the Tagus. Wellesley's force left Abrantes on 27 June with some 23,000 British and German troops and thirty guns and crossing the Spanish frontier three days later, entered Plasencia on the 9th and 10th. On the 11th the two commanders met near Almaraz on the Tagus and it was decided to attack Victor, who was reckoned to have some 20,000 men, on the Alberche beyond Talavera. This was on the assumption that Sebastiani's 17,000 men would be contained by a Spanish corps under Venegas near Madridejos, that Ney was still in Galicia, and that Soult and Mortier were alike far distant near Avila. What actually happened was that Sebastiani, after sundry operations and minor fights, succeeded in joining Victor and that in consequence the Anglo-Spanish force found themselves on 26 July at Talavera threatened in front, not by the 20,000 men they had reckoned upon but by over 40,000 good French troops under Marshal Jourdan who with King Joseph had also joined Victor's force.

The position taken up by Wellesley was in rear of a stream with its right on the Tagus at Talavera, 32,000 Spaniards occupied the right for a mile, whilst the left for two miles along the rising ground was held by the British. Here lay the key of the position, the Cerro de Medellin, on which were posted Richard Stewart's and Tilson's Brigades under Hill.

About noon on the 27th the French drove in both the British Cavalry and an Infantry Division which were thrown out as outposts on the Alberche, surprising some of our infantry and inflicting some 450

casualties on our troops. Following up this initial success they pushed on to the main position of the Allies and at about half past four attacked four Spanish battalions which on the approach of the French fell back in confusion. At about 7 p.m. the action broke off.

The night fell dark and Victor, having seen how weakly the Cerro de Medellin was held and perhaps encouraged alike by the ease of his advance against the British outposts and his success against the Spaniards, decided on making a night attack. Ruffin's Division, consisting of three regiments each of three battalions, was ordered to attack the Cerro in front and on both flanks. The centre regiment made good its advance about 9 p.m. and driving back the battalions it encountered seized the crest of the hill. It was now that Hill ordered Stewart's Brigade to make a counter-attack, the 1st Battalion of Detachments leading. The Battalion, which naturally lacked cohesion, suffered heavily and met with a check, the men, who were full of fight, in vain calling out for orders. But the 29th pressed forward and overthrew the 9th Léger, driving them down the hill with a loss of some 300 men. Stewart's Brigade, which bore the stress of this attack had 125 casualties of which about half were in the Battalion of Detachments which lost one officer and fourteen men killed and forty men wounded. After this repulse the French remained quiet on their side of the valley.

During the night Victor made arrangements for renewing the attack at daylight. When dawn broke Wellesley ordered Stewart and Tilson to send out the light Companies, and among them our Riflemen of the 1st Battalion of Detachments, to cover the front. The battle commenced by a tremendous cannonade from thirty guns on the British position on the Cerro, which caused Wellesley to withdraw Stewart's and Tilson's Brigades behind the crest. The French line of skirmishers pushed forward and as they neared the British they masked the fire of their guns which were thereupon turned on the right of Stewart's Brigade tearing great gaps in it. The Battalion of Detachments suffered

very severely from this cannonade. Ruffin's Brigade now advanced in a line of battalion columns in double-companies at close interval ; the brunt of the attack fell upon Stewart's Brigade which was formed up in line. When the French columns were within close range Stewart poured in a volley and after a furious interchange of fire the British charged with the bayonet and drove the French down the hill with terrible slaughter. In this sharp fight Hill's Division lost between seven and eight hundred men, the 1st Battalion of Detachments alone losing over two hundred. The two French regiments which attacked had forty officers and over 1,100 men killed and wounded and it must be remembered that all this slaughter took place within forty minutes.¹

King Joseph now decided to make a general attack. He had some 30,000 men massed in front of the Cerro which Wellesley held with 17,000 British troops, and at half past one he delivered a furious attack on Wellesley's centre, which, although at one time nearly successful, ended in the complete defeat of the attackers with the loss of seventeen guns. Now it was that Victor made yet a third attempt to capture the Cerro, this time by outflanking it on the north. Wellesley thereupon ordered his Cavalry to threaten this advance, but some of our regiments charging prematurely over ground not reconnoitred got into confusion and, after suffering heavily, were driven back by the French infantry. The French attack on the Cerro however was not pressed home. At six o'clock Joseph ordered his troops to retire to their positions of the previous day and thus the battle ended. Both Armies bivouacked on the ground they had held on the morn of the battle but after nightfall, Victor, hearing that British troops were advancing opposite to his position, ordered a retirement of his corps. Sebastiani followed suit and by daylight the whole French Army was in its old position behind the Alberche. Soon after daylight the Light Brigade under Brigadier-

¹ Fortescue VII, 242.

General Robert Craufurd arrived on the field of battle after an almost continuous march of some twenty-six hours covering about forty-two miles.¹ It was at once pushed forward to relieve A. Campbell's Division which was holding the line of outposts along the Alberche river some four to five miles in advance of the scene of the combat.

On this day the men belonging to the Rifle Company of the 1st Battalion of Detachments who had done such good service on the Douro and at Talavera joined the 1st Battalion, the men of the 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry also rejoining their respective corps.² It is worthy to recall that these three Battalions which now came under Wellesley's command had all served under Moore in the Coruña Campaign six months earlier. With them came Captain Hew Ross's Brigade of Horse Artillery, and it is of interest to note that this was the first battery of our Horse Artillery to serve under Wellesley.

The total British losses in this most desperate fight were twenty-seven officers and 643 men killed, 171 officers and 3,235 men wounded and six officers and 439 men missing, or 4,523 casualties. These were in addition to the 1,141 of the preceding day. Of the "missing" over one-half belonged to the German Legion, taken prisoners. The French lost over 7,000 men, or about one in six, whilst the British loss of over 5,000 was over one in four.

Talavera was the first big battle fought by the British in the Peninsula and although subsequent events forced Wellesley to retreat, it was undeniably a victory for the British arms, and a glorious one. Yet everything which counts in war was in favour of the French and had their leading been better it is hard to see how they could have failed to win and yet harder to see how in such a case the whole of Wellesley's force could have escaped annihilation. Never was the meaning of the old words "the fortune of war" better exemplified.

¹ A full account of this famous march is given on p. 70.

² Muster Rolls and Pay Lists of the 1st Battalion of Embodied Detachments 1809, Record Office.

Although the 95th was not present it was represented and well represented by the Rifle Company it supplied to the 1st Battalion of Detachments. As has been shown, this Battalion was engaged at the most critical point of the whole field of battle both on the night of the 27th and on the morn of the 28th. In the repulse of Victor's attack it lost twenty-six men killed and nine officers and 166 men wounded, its total casualties in the two days amounting to over 270 out of about 680 all ranks. I have been unable to find what were the casualties in the Rifle Company although from time to time I have come across references to men who were "wounded at Talavera."¹

Wellesley in his Despatch to the Secretary of State written on 29 July 1809 particularly mentioned "the 1st batt. of detachments commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Bunbury" for its conduct in the battle.²

When in 1848 the General Service Medal was issued to the Army, nine survivors of the 95th Rifles who had fought at Talavera made good their claims and received the clasp.

We must now trace the movements of our 1st Battalion upon being ordered to return to the Peninsula in 1809. Readers of this History will by this time have become more or less familiarized with the names of some of the officers who took part in the various expeditions and campaigns described, but henceforward a new light

¹ There is a most graphic account of a meeting with one of the wounded Riflemen from Talavera in the *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, the Historical Painter, see RIFLE BRIGADE CHRONICLE, 1894, p. 118.

² Well. Despatches, iv, p. 537.

is thrown, not on the deeds alone of the Rifle Corps but on the mode of life of its officers and men, their habits and customs, by the numerous diaries and memoirs they wrote, which enable those interested in the Regiment almost to visualize our Riflemen who lived and fought and died during the eventful years of the campaigns in the Peninsula.

About 20 May orders were received at Hythe for the 1st Battalion to embark and at 2 a.m. on the morning of the 25th it marched out of barracks, over 1,000 strong, for Dover. According to accounts written at the time the 1st Battalion had "a most excellent Band of Music and thirty bugle-horns which through every country village strikes up the old tune "Over the hills and far away." It was to the stirring sound of this famous old Rifleman's Bugle March that the Battalion made its way from its quarters in the quiet old Cinque Ports town of Hythe to Dover. Arriving at Dover about 7 a.m. it was embarked in the *Fortune*, *Malabar*, and *Laurel* transports which sailed almost immediately and anchored in the Downs the same evening. In the Downs lay other transports, having on board the 1st Battalions of the 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry. Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd embarked in the *Nymph* frigate of 44 guns. Thus it came about that the first muster of the Light Brigade took place at sea. Foul winds varied by stormy weather kept the transports at anchor for over a week and it was not until 3 June that they sailed under escort of the *Nymph* and the *Kangaroo* Sloop of war. They anchored off St. Helens on the 4th and the weather proving very squally they moved into Cowes Roads the next day. Here they were detained by contrary winds for six days. On the 11th they sailed but got no further than Yarmouth when foul winds again forced them to anchor. Here they lay for another week and it was not till the 18th that they at last got a fair wind and passing the Needles started off down Channel. At daybreak on the 24th they passed Cape Prioriño close to Ferrol and, sailing along the coast of

Portugal, sighted the Rock of Lisbon at dawn on the 28th and anchored off Lisbon the same afternoon.

I have given these details as they are a good example of the delays of a voyage in a transport in the days of masts and sails. It will be seen that although the run from Yarmouth to Lisbon only occupied ten days the Light Brigade were thirty-five days at sea, over twenty-two having been perforce spent at anchor. What these delays meant will be realized later on. After a wait of another four days, at midnight on the 2 July the troops were transferred from the transports to flat-bottomed boats and proceeded up river on the flood tide to the village of Vallada which they reached at nightfall and, having landed, bivouacked. Next day they marched to Santarem where they halted for two days until the Light Brigade had assembled and the baggage animals, purchased in Lisbon, had arrived. On the 8th the Brigade marched to Punhete, and on the 9th to Abrantes.

Here it was that Craufurd issued his famous "Standing Orders" for the regulating of marches which have ever since been regarded as a model of their sort and have obtained a world-wide reputation. It is easy to realize that these orders were the direct outcome of his own wide experiences, for they contain simple and effective instructions as to how to deal with the daily problems which have had to be faced by commanders since masses of armed men first took the field.¹ But in addition to his exhaustive orders for marches and marching he also issued admirable instructions as to the duties of officers and men both in camp and in quarters, also as to the issue of rations, the conduct of fatigue and foraging parties, the management of the commissariat and the methods of inspection and of making returns and reports. It may be imagined by soldiers of the present day that such elaborate and

¹ These orders have been translated into various foreign languages and taken as a basis for orders of the sort in European armies. Colonel Robert Home had them reprinted in his famous "Précis of Modern Tactics."

comprehensive instructions were unnecessary in that they must have been mere repetitions of the ordinary army instructions on such matters. Such however was by no means the case, for in 1809 no official rules existed for regulating the duties of officers and men in the field. Thus it is that the name of Robert Craufurd will endure for all time in our Army as the officer who first attempted to grapple with the complex problem of regulating the movements, rationing and quartering of a field force.

It is almost unnecessary to say that these orders were by no means welcomed by those to whom they applied, for in not a few instances they struck hard at the ingrained habits of both officers and men on active service which had almost been consecrated by custom. The following entry in the field journal of an officer of the Light Division shows how Craufurd's elaborate orders were received by those who served under him :—

“ 10 July. Halted at Abrantes. Bathed in Tagus. A soldier of the 95th Regt. was drowned when bathing this morning. Brigadier General Robert Craufurd (damn him) issued this day to the Light Brigade an immensity of the most *tyrannical* and *oppressive standing orders* that were ever compiled by a British officer.”¹

The interpolated comminations passed on Craufurd as well as the italics employed bear eloquent testimony to his extreme unpopularity at this time.

The usual routine during this advance was to parade at 1.30 a.m. and march at two and continue marching until about eleven a.m. “with an occasional halt for half an hour.” Arrived at the end of the march, which was usually at some place shaded with trees, the Brigade halted till one or two the following morning. The weather was excessively hot and several men died from the heat whilst marching. The usual

¹ MS. *Journal*, Leach.

distances covered in these marches was from nine to twelve English statute miles which was increased to fifteen miles. On the 20th the Brigade crossed the stream known as the Rio Eljas which is on the frontier of Portugal and entered Spain, halting at Zarza la Mayor. On the 25th it reached Malpartida and on the 26th marched at two a.m., and for the greater part of the day advanced through dense fir woods and oaks. Owing to the guide losing the way this march was not concluded until late in the day. A halt was made near the almost deserted village of Venta de Bazagona. A ration of a pound of bread was issued to all and the men set to work to make huts of branches and rested till 1.30 the following morning. On this day, the 27th, the Light Brigade marched to Navalmoral, a distance of about seventeen miles.

THE FORCED MARCH.

See Map
XV,
page 76.

Navalmoral lies in the valley of the Tagus which at this part of its course is bounded by the lofty Sierra de Gredos on the north and the less elevated Sierra de Guadalupe on the south. The summits on the northern Sierra are covered with snow even in mid-summer, a fact noted by several of the Light Brigade in their diaries of the time. The heat in Castile in July is excessive, so much so that the major part of the inhabitants, accustomed as they are to its strength, avoid going out of doors during the "hours of fire" as they call the time when the sun is at its worst. The roads are bad and at places ankle deep in sand, strewn with stones and cut by deep ruts in the shifting soil. Bad as roads are to this day in Spain, a hundred years ago they were far worse, indeed many were non-existent, their place being taken by rough tracks across country. Water is rarely met with, for during the tremendous summer droughts all but the deeper wells dry up and the rivulets cease to run, their dry beds being marked by pools of putrid water much fouled by the parched cattle which resort to them.

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It was through such a country that Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd on the morning of 28 July started with his Light Brigade in his desperate attempt to join Sir Arthur Wellesley before the French should attack him at Talavera.

The British soldiers were in their usual thick cloth uniforms, tightly fitting, with leathern stocks round their throats and heavy shakos on their heads. Every infantryman carried his heavy arms, with sixty to eighty rounds of ball ammunition, and his great coat, full service knapsack and equipment, weighing altogether between fifty and sixty pounds.

It is as well to understand the nature of the task which lay before our Riflemen and their comrades of the 43rd and 52nd on this memorable day, for without a just appreciation of the difficulties of the ground to be traversed, the intense heat to be endured, the absence of water, let alone of rations to sustain them and the great weight to be carried by every man, clad in a manner designed as it were to impede their movements and to exhaust their strength, no idea can be formed of the magnitude of the efforts made by these gallant fellows to give a helping hand to their greatly outnumbered comrades on the field of Talavera.

The distance from Navalmoral to the position taken up by Wellesley on the Cerro de Medellin two miles north of the town of Talavera is a little over thirty-eight miles¹ measured "as the crow flies." The actual marching distance by the route taken by the Light Brigade is about forty-two miles, and probably more, owing to the usual turns and windings of the road to avoid broken or unfavourable ground. On 28 July the Light Brigade paraded early and marched off at dawn. The sun rises about 5.10 at that time of the year in Castile and in all

¹ The distances given in the following account have been most carefully verified from the best maps obtainable and are believed to be as near correct as possible. The reasons for my having departed from the usually accepted accounts of the length of the march are given in an appendix.

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probability the troops marched off about four a.m. Leach says "before day dawned" but Lieut. John Cox and others say "marched at daylight"; as will be seen in the course of this story, everything points to four a.m. being the actual hour when the Brigade advanced from Navalmoral. It had been Craufurd's intention to halt at La Calzada a small village about fourteen and a half miles distant and, as usual, rest his men during the great heat of the day. But upon reaching La Calzada at about nine a.m. he received an urgent despatch from Sir Arthur Wellesley ordering him to bring on the Light Brigade with all possible speed, since a general action was imminent. The despatch of Wellesley's was in all probability written at a very early hour on the 28th, since the French attack commenced soon after dawn. La Calzada is about twenty-seven miles from the position occupied by Wellesley at Talavera, a distance which could hardly be covered by a despatch rider in less than two hours. On receipt of this news Craufurd decided to push on at once and after a very brief halt, said to have been about half-an-hour, moved off again. As the Light Brigade advanced the distant roar of the cannonade of over 100 pieces of ordnance was distinctly heard. The day seems to have been exceptionally sultry and the sun is described by those who took part in the march as "scorching." Several men died of sunstroke and others were struck down but Craufurd pushed on and a little before noon reached Oropesa, twenty-one miles from Navalmoral and with nigh twenty-one miles march still ahead of him. But it was absolutely necessary to call a halt, for the men had been on foot for over eight hours. Now it was that he ordered the commanding officers to weed out any men who showed signs of failing or were sickly and directed that all baggage should be left behind.

After a few hours' halt the bugles sounded "the fall in" and although our men had already marched many hours under a burning sun they pushed on again at five p.m.

As the Light Brigade advanced the roar of the distant artillery ever grew louder and louder. Soon numbers of Spanish soldiers were

met fleeing from the field of battle. These unfortunates met with a most unpleasant reception from our men. Later on the stream of fugitives was augmented by both British and Germans, mostly it is true non-combatants. Several wounded officers mounted on led horses gave accounts of what they had seen of the fight. It can well be imagined how these sights and the news of the repeated attacks of the French inspired our men to hurry forward regardless of fatigue. An eye-witness writes "Every man seemed anxious to push on, and all were in high spirits, hoping soon to be on the field of battle and to assist our brave countrymen, the cannon distinctly sounding in our ears as we came near."

After darkness fell, the labour of marching along the heavy sandy roads was greatly increased and at ten o'clock a halt became absolutely necessary, and a few hours' rest was given the weary troops. No water had been met with throughout this day's march and it is on record that, upon halting, a pool of stagnant water much used by cattle was found and that the men drank greedily of its filthy contents. Those who have travelled in Spain in summer-time can best imagine what sort of liquid our gallant fellows swallowed to assuage their terrible thirst. Finally at two a.m. they were once again on the move. As daylight broke they met crowds of wounded men and others, making their way to the rear. At six o'clock the Light Brigade reached the stricken field of Talavera having covered the forty-two miles from Navalmoral in just twenty-six hours, during which it was actually marching for over sixteen and a half hours, the average rate of advance being thus a little over two and a half miles per hour, including short halts.

Some may think I have underestimated the actual distance covered during the famous forced march. Possibly I have and the distance may likely enough be more or the time taken be a little less, as indeed

¹ Simmons, 31.

has been stated on high authority. But this is after all a mere side-issue. The glory of the march lay not in the fractions of a mile per hour to be added to its total length but in the splendid endurance of the non-commissioned officers and men, who, in spite of the tremendous difficulties which I have described, pushed on in response to Robert Craufurd's appeal. I believe I am right in saying that the officers, as was the custom in the Light Division, were mostly mounted and there are dark rumours of Craufurd's having seized upon a certain number of transport animals at Oropesa much to the wrath of the Commissariat officer, on which to mount some of the officers who lacked steeds. The Light Brigade upon its arrival was ordered at once to take up the line of outposts along the Alberche some four to five miles in advance of the British position. Thus, the total distance marched was about forty-six to forty-seven miles, at the outside.

The sight which met the men of the Light Brigade as they strode across the field of battle to the accompaniment of the strains or their bugles was indeed an appalling one and graphic accounts of its horrors are to be found in the journals of several of the 95th officers. It must be recalled that there had been heavy fighting on the 27th as well as throughout the 28th and that the French and English dead numbered 1,500. The intense heat of a midsummer sun in Spain had already done its work and the condition of many of the dead can be imagined. The field was strewn with thousands of wounded men, some of whom had been terribly burnt by the long grass and standing corn taking fire from the bursting of the shells. Indeed many had been burned to death.¹ The men of the Light Brigade had the greatest difficulty in preventing the marauding Spaniards from murdering the unfortunate wounded Frenchmen who lay scattered about in every direction.

On the following day the Light Brigade were posted in the woods

¹ Simmons, 22.

near Talavera, companies of the Rifle Corps being thrown forward in the woods along the Alberche to form the advanced posts of the Army.¹ There was some firing among the French and Spanish Cavalry vedettes at daybreak. During the day many of the Light Brigade were "employed in collecting the dead bodies and putting them into large heaps mixed with faggots and burning them. The stench from so many dead bodies was volatile and offensive beyond conception as the heat of the weather was very great."² The following day there was the same bickering with the outposts. The French Army could be seen occupying a position beyond the Alberche about four miles from the British outposts. On 1 August the Spaniards took over the task of attempting to dispose of the dead by burning. And Leach has left it on record how this "caused a horrid smell for many miles round."

I must now revert to the general strategic situation which had developed with startling rapidity during the days when Wellesley and Cuesta were so fully occupied near Talavera. We have seen how Sebastiani had managed to elude Venegas and join King Joseph before Talavera. Venegas subsequently advanced in a hesitating manner on Madrid and caused some alarm in the capital. After the battle Joseph, on 30 July decided to leave Victor to hold the line of the Alberche and to send Sebastiani to attack Venegas. The upshot of this was that some ten days later Sebastiani defeated Venegas near Toledo. But meanwhile much had occurred. Wellesley, trusting the Spaniards to hold the mountain passes of Los Baños and Las Perales on his left flank and rear, after his victory at Talavera, meditated an advance on Madrid and tried to induce Cuesta to follow up Joseph, but in vain. On 30 July he received the unwelcome intelligence that Soult was approaching the Pass of Los Baños, some sixty miles in his rear and only

¹ *M.S. Journal*, Leach.

² Simmons, 22.

twenty-five miles from Plasencia, thus threatening his line of communications. He however reckoned on Beresford's presence in Soult's rear to keep him in check. In this however he was mistaken, for on the night of 1 August he heard that Soult had forced the Pass, weakly held by a detachment of Cuesta's troops, and was advancing on his line of communications and on the 2nd that he was actually at Plasencia! Wellesley, after some difficulty, induced Cuesta to hold Talavera whilst he himself marched back along his former line of advance to attack Soult. On 3 August Wellesley reached Oropesa and not till then did he learn by intercepted despatches from Jourdan and Joseph to Soult that the latter's Corps was followed by Ney's and further that Victor was about to renew his attack on Talavera. The complexity of the situation at this point is not easy to summarize briefly. Soult's force turned out to be double what Wellesley imagined. Cuesta, finding that Venegas had failed him, decided to retreat from Talavera. Then came a report that French troops had actually reached Naval-moral, soon followed by the news that not only Soult's Corps or even Soult's and Ney's, but that the three Corps of Soult, Ney and Mortier, some 50,000 strong were pouring down from Los Baños and Las Perales. Now it was that Cuesta, leaving a Division of Cavalry and another of Infantry at Talavera, marched his Army back to Oropesa in great confusion, abandoning the thousands of wounded left in his charge.

On the same day that Wellesley heard of the overwhelming strength of Soult's advance, Soult learnt that Wellesley had only 20,000 men. Wellesley with his direct line of retreat on Portugal thus severed turned off nine miles due south to Arzobispo to hold the bridge across the Tagus at that point so as to enable such of the wounded who were fit to be moved or who could crawl along to be brought from Talavera. At two p.m. on the 4th the French Cavalry patrols reached the bridge but the British troops had by that time all

FORCED MARCH OF LIGHT BRIGADE

FORCED MARCH OF LIGHT BRIGADE

crossed to the south side of the Tagus and continued their retreat the same night towards Deleitosa. But Wellesley's position was still insecure, since there was a second passage across the Tagus at Almaraz some twenty-five miles below Arzobispo and only twelve from Naval-moral where Soult was reported to be. The measures he took to guard this passage will now be described.

After the battle of Talavera Donkin's Brigade consisting of the 45th, 87th, 88th and five Companies of the 5th Battalion of the 60th Regiment were placed in Craufurd's command, thus augmenting it for the time to two Brigades of Infantry and a battery of Horse Artillery, the Division thus formed being styled the 3rd. This arrangement as will be seen did not endure for long. Upon Wellesley marching on Oropesa, Craufurd accompanied him and the Light Brigade after a twelve hours' march in "suffocating heat, with clouds of dust and not a drop of water to be got," reached that place at two p.m. At four o'clock on the following morning, the 4th, Wellesley sent his baggage across the river at Arzobispo, and at noon followed it with his main body, the rear-guard being formed of "some Dragoons and the Rifle Corps.¹ After crossing the bridge the 95th took post in a wood close by it to deny the passage to the enemy and at two p.m. Soult's Cavalry patrols appeared on the far bank.

Craufurd's Division was at this time famishing and he gave the men leave to kill any animals they found in the woods. By rare good fortune our men encountered a herd of swine which were set upon and many of the luckless pigs were killed, cut up, cooked and eaten in an incredibly short time.² At midnight Wellesley continued his retirement along the great road towards Trujillo, detaching Craufurd with his Division in the early hours of the 5th through the mountains westward with orders to seize the passages of the river at Almaraz

¹ *MS. Journal*, Leach.

² Cope, 46.

as quickly as possible. The Division halted at two p.m. and bivouacked on a barren hill, far from any human habitation, after a most exhausting march of over thirteen hours along mountain tracks and execrable roads, the weather being described as "immoderately hot and a great scarcity of water." At 3.30 p.m. on the 6th the march was resumed and at six p.m. the Light Brigade reached Romangordo and bivouacked near it, Donkin's Brigade bivouacking at Las Casas del Puerto. The 95th pushed forward to the broken bridge of Almaraz and took up the outpost line, Soult's outposts being visible along the northern bank of the river. This day's march was a tiring one and numbers of men of the different regiments in both brigades dropped on the road from excessive fatigue and the intense heat of the sun. On the 7th the Light Brigade occupied a grove of olive and cork trees near the deserted village of Romangordo and at nightfall the Rifles were moved down to the river and two Companies were posted on piquet to watch the bridge and the ford below. The remainder of the Light Brigade was in support a mile in rear, Donkin's Brigade being near Las Casas del Puerto a mile beyond. This arrangement was repeated daily for nigh a fortnight, the 95th being moved down to the river at nightfall each day and returning to their bivouacs in the wood at sunrise. All this time the men of Craufurd's Division were nearly starving since no regular issue of rations took place. The French fared far better and were able to seize upon a good amount of local supplies, but on the British side of the river the marauding Spanish soldiery waylaid and robbed the unfortunate villagers who attempted to bring in vegetables and bread for sale to our starving soldiers who were well supplied with money but with little else. To make up in some degree for the absence of bread or flour, very coarse pea-flour was issued to our men in small quantities. This they strove to bake by making it up into thin cakes and placing them on a camp-kettle lid or a flat stone over a fire. In addition to the pea-flour a small ration of goat's flesh

was, from time to time, issued. Some of the more enterprising or more hungry of our men gleaned the cornfields for stray ears of corn which they rubbed between their hands and ground (?) between two stones into a mixture of flour, chaff and dust, out of which they made thin cakes. The Riflemen named this miserable spot "Dough-boy Hill" whilst the plain below where they nightly bivouacked, not seldom supperless, they called "The Valley of Starvation."¹

On the 12th the French piquets appeared in force on the heights opposite to the bridge and ford but no shots were exchanged between them and the two Companies of Riflemen who were always posted at those points. So far as the Light Brigade was concerned, this was the commencement of the excellent understanding which existed from this time forward and throughout the Peninsular War between our Riflemen on outpost duty and the French advanced posts, the officers frequently saluting one another and the men refraining from causing useless alarms by firing. So well was this understood that our Riflemen, when ordered to advance and drive in the French piquets, used to hold up their rifles, butt uppermost and tap the brass box in the stock (provided originally for holding grease patches). This to show that they were in earnest and that their adversaries, if they wished to hold their ground, had better stand on their defence. Without such private signal the ordinary movements of French and British piquets alike were treated as mere matters of routine.²

The locality was most unhealthy, owing to the half-dried swamps

¹ *MS. Journal*, J. Cox.

² Over 30 years ago the late Sir William Cope (who had one of the original Baker rifles belonging to the 95th at Bramshill) told me how he had been shown exactly how our Riflemen made the famous signal of "We are in earnest" by such well-known Peninsular veterans as George Simmons, Sir Harry Smith and Colonel Thomas Smith and proceeded to instruct me in the process. When Sir William joined in 1835 and for three years later, the Baker rifle was still the weapon of the Rifle Brigade.

bordering on the river and great sickness ensued and no medicine of any kind was to be got. To add to all, in the terse words of one of the officers writing from the spot, "The days are intolerably hot and the nights cursed chilly with heavy dews." At last on 20 August, Craufurd received orders to withdraw from the bridge at Almaraz; this he did at midnight marching through Deleitosa at dawn and bivouacking in a forest of cork trees on the banks of the River Almonte. Thence the march was continued via Trujillo and Caceres to Valencia de Alcantara a town with a small fortified citadel close to the Portuguese frontier. Here the Division remained for a couple of days (26th to 28th).

Craufurd as we have seen had become most unpopular with the officers and men under him. It would be futile to deny that, excellent as were his ideas as to marching and handling of troops, his irascible temper, his arrogance and bullying nature caused him by this time to be absolutely hated. It took many months before those he commanded realized that his numerous orders and regulations were issued solely for the benefit and well-being of the men. That he at times, more especially at this period of his career, enforced his draconic will with considerable severity is unfortunately unquestionable. Hence it is not surprising that many of the letters and journals of officers of the Light Division written at this time are full of references to him of the most uncomplimentary nature. For example the following passage occurs in the diary of an officer of the Rifles on 27 August at Valencia de Alcantara. The italics are in the original journal.

"27th August. The Division paraded at six this evening when we got volleys of *abusive* and *blasphemous* language from Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd, who after flogging half a dozen men for some very *frivolous offences* committed on our late harassing marches, we were dismissed."¹

¹ MS. Journal, Leach.

The Campaign of Talavera

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Continuing the retirement Craufurd crossed the Portuguese frontier on the 29th and halted at Castello de Vide. Here the Division bivouacked for three days among large chestnut trees after which they were given quarters in the town for another five days. On 7 September, he marched to Portalegre and on the 10th to Arronches, arriving at Campo Mayor on the 11th. Wellesley now established his headquarters at Badajoz with his cavalry in advance at Merida and Alburquerque. The British troops were cantoned about Estremoz and in the adjacent towns, Craufurd's Division being at Campo Mayor. Here they remained for three months during which time many men fell victims to "typhus fever," ague and dysentery which were very prevalent throughout the Army. The General Hospital was at Elvas and some 4,000 British soldiers were buried at that town during the winter months. Campo Mayor is a small fortified place about three miles west of the Caya, a small river near the frontier of Portugal. Campo Mayor is described as a nice town with good shops but it proved very unhealthy, so much so that in December it was found advisable to send detachments of Companies away for a week at a time for change of air to adjacent towns. During this prolonged stay at Campo Mayor, the Officers got a certain amount of sport both with gun and greyhounds. Among the game birds mentioned are great and little bustard, partridges, sandgrouse, quail, duck, snipe, woodcock and plover. Red deer, wild boar, wolves, foxes and wild cats were found in the forest of Alburquerque. The only event of any importance during the three months inaction was a visit from Sir Arthur Wellesley on 18 November who reviewed Craufurd's Division.

See Map
"Lisbon—
Valladolid"
at end of
volume.

Meanwhile much had been happening in Spain. Wellesley who had learnt by bitter experience the danger of placing reliance on the promises alike of the Spanish Juntas and of the majority of the Spanish Commanders in the field was busily engaged in perfecting his plans for the campaign of the coming year. Not the least among these were his

arrangements for securing the safe evacuation of Portugal for his army in the event of his being compelled to abandon the struggle. In October he paid a visit to Lisbon and, after two weeks examination of the adjacent country, on 20 October ordered his Chief Engineer, Colonel Fletcher, to fortify a double line of defences from the sea to the Tagus. Thus were secretly begun the wonderful defensive Lines of Torres Vedras whose very existence was unknown to the world until a year later, when the invading hosts of Masséna were brought up against their impregnable line of redoubts and defences.

Here it will be convenient to note that in January 1810 Sir Arthur Wellesley was granted a peerage for his brilliant services in the preceding year on the Douro and at Talavera and was henceforward known as Baron Douro and Viscount Wellington, and it is as Wellington that we shall speak of him in future.¹

¹ In the Army he was known as "Old Douro," sometimes with an extra adjective preceding; hence the story of "*Beau Douro*" told by Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 198.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEFENCE OF PORTUGAL, 1809-1810.

BARBA DEL PUERCO, 1810.

Military situation after Talavera—Spanish plans for carrying on the War—Wellington declines to co-operate—The defence of Portugal and Lisbon—The lines of advance open to the French—Distribution of the French Armies in the Peninsula—Wellington's general dispositions to defend Portugal—Soult invades Andalusia—The Spaniards abandon Seville and fall back on Cadiz—British troops, including two Companies of the Rifles arrive at Cadiz—Craufurd marches from Campo Mayor and crosses the Tagus—Outpost lines on the Douro, the Agueda and the Dos Casas—The 1st King's German Hussars join the Light Brigade—Craufurd's system of outposts described—Barba del Puerco—O'Hare's Company on piquet—Dispositions for the night—Attempted surprise by the French—A desperate defence—Beckwith arrives—Extracts from Regimental accounts of the affair—Craufurd's Divisional Order on the fight—Wellington mentions it in Despatches and in letters—Sidney Beckwith : an ideal Commanding Officer—The expansion of "The Light Brigade" into "The Light Division."

DURING the operations which included the passage of the Douro and the campaign of Talavera, the general military situation from a British point of view had not improved. Napoleon after his abortive attempt to destroy Moore and his army in Galicia had, as we have seen, returned to Paris and resumed personal control of affairs. Within six months he had crushed Austria at Wagram and had imposed upon her most onerous terms which included her acquiescence in all his conquests, the acceptance of his Continental System, the payment of a heavy war-indemnity and a rupture with England, with whom she had hitherto worked in concert. England's position at this time was indeed an extraordinary one for she was

now battling single-handed against Napoleon and all the nations he had compelled to fight on his side, her only allies being the shattered kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, bereft alike of rulers, governments and effective Armies. Yet few people realize how near Napoleon was to failure during the summer of 1809. His victory over Austria was gained only by the narrowest margin of good luck after his defeat at Aspern. Such successes as he obtained against Wellington in the Talavera campaign were due rather to the incompetence of the Spanish Generals than to the competence of his Marshals. The Walcheren Expedition, ill-directed as it was, had caused grave alarm in Paris. Everything pointed to a weakening of his wonderful powers of compelling victory. In spite of the retreat after Talavera England could at least take credit for having freed Portugal of the French and for having materially assisted the Spanish levies in Galicia in their gallant resistance to the invaders.

See Map
"Spain and
Portugal"
at end of
volume.

We turn now to the movements of the Spanish Armies during the period when Wellington was resting his forces in cantonments near Badajoz. In September and October the Junta planned various ill-arranged and desultory movements for an advance on Madrid and with the following results. On the north del Parque with some 40,000 Spaniards advanced to Tamames thirty-five miles south-west of Salamanca. Here he was attacked by Ney's corps under Marchand, some 13,000 strong, on 18 October, but he defeated it with heavy loss and pushed on to Salamanca. So far so good. But on the 28th del Parque was attacked and routed by Kellerman at Alba de Tormes. Ten days earlier on 19 November Areizaga with 50,000 men advancing on Madrid from the south had been defeated heavily by Soult with 30,000 men at Ocaña. There remained but the small force in the centre on the Tagus some 8,000 strong under the Duke of Alburquerque. This Wellington besought the Junta to reinforce so as to cover the passages of the Tagus at Almaraz and Arzobispo. Not only did the Junta refuse this most

reasonable request but they withdrew Alburquerque to an indefensible position on the Guadiana thus leaving open the road into Andalucia, the one province which the French had hitherto been unable to attack and whose conquest they had long planned. Alburquerque applied for help to Wellington who not only sent a stern refusal but declined thenceforward to attempt any combined operations with the Spanish leaders in the field.

Wellington at this time was fully occupied in striving to secure the defence of Portugal and more especially of Lisbon. Although the frontier of Portugal could be crossed at many places there were only three routes by which an invading army might advance. The first of these was from the north but since Soult had been driven from Oporto and Galicia had been abandoned by the French, an advance from that side was no longer practicable. The second was along the valley of the Guadiana and across Alemtejo, but this led south of the Tagus and on the wrong side of the river which was held in its lower reaches by British gunboats and was only passable by bridge at and above Abrantes. There remained the central line of advance from Salamanca through the province of Beira. Thus it came about that Wellington's principal task was to watch and defend the eastern frontier between the Douro on the north and the Tagus on the south, a distance of about 100 miles. But even this space was reduced by further geographical conditions, for the extraordinary rugged and roadless region of the Serra da Estrella practically confined an invading force moving from Salamanca on Lisbon to the district between the Serra and the Douro, some fifty miles. Wellesley was quick to realize this and decided in December to march the bulk of his little Army to guard this portion of the frontier.

It would be well here to review the numbers of the French who at this time were available to complete the conquest of the Peninsula. Napoleon, being now free from all anxiety about Austria,

was able once again to devote his energies to affairs in Spain and Portugal, where, as we have seen, his brother and his unruly Marshals were meeting with somewhat qualified successes. He at once took steps to send strong reinforcements thither and soon 100,000 men were on the march southward. By the end of January 1810 he had altogether some 325,000 men in Spain of which 262,000 were actually "present under arms." Of this host Masséna was given command of the "Army of Portugal" destined to advance from Salamanca by Ciudad Rodrigo, drive the English into the sea and seize Lisbon. His available force consisted of the VIth Corps (Ney) and the VIIIth Corps (Junot). The IInd Corps (Reynier) on the Tagus was also put at his disposal. These three Corps numbered altogether 83,000 men. Soult (with King Joseph) was ordered to conquer Andalusia and was given the Ist Corps (Victor), the IVth Corps (Sebastiani) and the Vth Corps (Mortier) altogether about 50,000 men. The remainder of the French army was operating in Catalonia, Aragon and Navarre and other provinces where their movements do not immediately concern us.

Wellington in order to hold his own against these vastly superior forces now disposed the bulk of his troops, some 25,000 men, along the Portuguese frontier near Celorico to watch the line of advance by Ciudad Rodrigo (which was held by the Spaniards) and detached 5,000 British and 5,000 of the new Portuguese Army under Hill to Abrantes to observe the road from Badajoz, which was also garrisoned by Spaniards. The frontier fortresses of Almeida and Elvas were held by the Portuguese who numbered about 30,000 and who also acted as a reserve at Thomar. Some 15,000 Portuguese militia were north of the Douro and about the same number under Beresford in Alemtejo.

Before describing Wellington's movements during the winter of 1809 we must see how the invasion of Andalusia progressed, and more especially since it resulted in some stirring episodes in

which portions of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions or the 95th Rifles came on the scene and played a conspicuous part. Areizaga after his defeat in November at Ocaña had fallen back to the Sierra Morena where he endeavoured with some 23,000 men scattered along a front of about 110 miles to hold the passes leading southward ; a hopeless disposition which invited defeat.

Early in January 1810 King Joseph left Madrid and joined Soult. Reynier with the IInd Corps was left to watch the valley of the Tagus near Medellin where Alburquerque with some 9,000 men was posted, whilst Victor with 20,000 men advanced on Cordoba. Soult with 40,000 men attacked along a front of forty miles the passes held by the Spaniards and easily forced them and arrived at Andujar two days before Victor occupied Cordoba. Sebastiani with 10,000 men was now sent to seize Jaen and Granada whilst Joseph moved on Seville with 32,000 men.

And now an incident took place which, as events proved, had a most important effect on the fortunes of the invaders. Alburquerque, threatened by Reynier from the north-east and with Soult's Army pouring through the passes of the Sierra Morena south-east of him, ignored various impossible orders of the Central Junta and marched on Seville. On 23 January he crossed the Guadalquivir near Carmona and came into touch with Victor's cavalry advancing on Seville and heard that the Central Junta had fled to Cadiz. He at once decided to fall back with all speed, not on Seville but on Cadiz. It was a wise decision and one fraught with far-reaching consequences. Victor's advanced cavalry arrived at Seville on 29 January and the Corporation after two days' paltry resistance surrendered and on 1 February King Joseph entered the city. Alburquerque had now about 11,000 men with him for he had picked up some detachments on the road but he had little cavalry and no supplies. Victor, instead of pursuing him with a strong force of cavalry, only sent a brigade after him. The Spanish cavalry

covered the retreat with the greatest difficulty and Alburquerque reached Cadiz on 3 February with his men worn out and starving. Victor arrived forty-eight hours later only to find the bridge at San Fernando broken down and batteries commanding the approaches. Thus was Cadiz saved, for so long as England had command of the sea the famous fortress was impregnable. Only a few days before these events a brigade of British infantry had arrived at Lisbon from England under the command of Major-General William Stewart. Stewart was at once sent to Cadiz and arrived there on 11 February, his command consisting of the 79th, 2nd Battalion 87th and 94th Regiments with two Companies of Artillery. On 14 March two Companies of the 2nd Battalion 95th Rifles, those of Captains Daniel Cadoux and of John Jenkins, arrived and landed at Cadiz.¹ They had left Hythe on 6 March and were the first Companies of the 2nd Battalion to embark for Spain after its return from the Walcheren Expedition. They had left Coruña about fourteen months previously.

I will now describe the movements of the 3rd Division under Craufurd from the time they received orders to quit their winter quarters at and about Campo Mayor in Alemtejo. On 11 December, exactly three months after the Rifles marched into Campo Mayor, orders were received for the Division to march northward and cross the Tagus. The sick and convalescent men were sent to Elvas and on the 12th the Rifles marched to Arronches and on the following day to Portalegre where the Light Brigade were assembled. On the 18th after a four days halt the march was resumed by Crato and Ponte de Sor to Abrantes which was reached on the 20th. Thence after a day's halt the Brigade marched to Punhete at the junction of the Tagus and Zezere. Here a bridge of boats had been constructed by

See Map
"Lisbon—
Valladolid"
at end of
volume.

¹ Strength 8 Officers, 1 Surgeon, 10 Sergeants, 8 Corporals, 5 Buglers, 200 Private Riflemen.

Wellington's order. On the 23rd the Brigade marched to Thomar and the next day to Aldea da Cruz where seven Companies of the Rifles were billeted, the remaining three, with the 52nd being pushed on to Ourem about a mile in advance. Thence the march was continued *via* Leiria, Pombal and Condeixa to Coimbra. This town lies on the north bank of the Mondego and a two days' halt here in comfortable billets was greatly appreciated by all ranks who obtained an ample supply of oranges, grapes and other fruit. The officers amused themselves by visiting the convents and were presented by the nuns with sweetmeats and fruits, whilst it is recorded that "the particular favourites were given little purses as tokens of regard."¹

The year 1810 opened with a march of fifteen miles over bad and mountainous roads to Ponte da Murcella, a miserable village, and on 2 January another twenty miles brought the Brigade to Galizes, next day Pinhancos at the foot of the northern slopes of the Serra da Estrella was reached, on the 4th, Celorico and on the 5th, Pinhel. The total distance marched from Campo Mayor to Pinhel was about 250 miles. On arrival at Pinhel information was received that the French were at San Felices, twenty miles eastward, with their piquets along the line of the Agueda and that from time to time strong parties of French soldiers crossed the river and entered Portugal in quest of plunder and to levy contributions. In consequence on the following day, 6 January, the Rifles were sent forward and after crossing the Coa by a strong stone bridge three miles in advance of Pinhel occupied the villages of Cinco Villas, Arreigada and Villar Torpim, about four miles beyond. Here they remained for twelve days.

On the 17th the Rifles were moved northward nearer to the river Douro and occupied the villages of Figueira, Mata de Lobos and Escalhão, the 43rd and 52nd being ordered to leave Pinhel and prolong

¹ Simmons, p. 42.

See Map
XX, p. 298.

the line thus held to the right. The country along the banks of the Douro is extremely wild, broken and rocky, and at this time the snow lay deep on the ground and many tracks of wolves were to be seen. Here the Light Brigade remained unmolested for over three weeks. The inhabitants of all this district are described in officers' letters at the time as living in miserable *chosas* in a condition of semi-starvation. Their normal condition of abject poverty was not improved by the raids of the French who seized all the goats and the cattle they could lay hands on and wasted and destroyed what they could not take away. What however seemed to shock and enrage the wretched peasantry more than aught else was the manner in which the French soldiers desecrated their churches and destroyed the images therein. Examples of this mania for destruction are recorded as having occurred all over the Peninsula. On 14 February, owing to reports of the enemy's movements the Brigade was withdrawn southward about fifteen miles to Valverde and Pereiro but on the following day it returned to its old cantonments east of Pinhel and once again a period of tranquillity intervened until the 27th when a Company of Riflemen under Captain Creagh was sent to the Spanish village of Bouza across the Turones where the road from San Felices branches off towards Almeida. Thence a strong reconnoitring patrol was pushed across the river Dos Casas to Barba del Puerco, another five miles. Here it fell in with a strong force of French cavalry and a few shots were fired at long range after which Creagh fell back on Bouza and eventually on Escarigo where Captain Leach's Company joined him as well as a third from Villa Torpim. On the 28th another reconnaissance was made under Captain Leach who, finding the enemy had left Barba del Puerco, entered it and sent a party on to the bridge across the Agueda in the ravine beyond. On this day it was ascertained that the French in San Felices were about 3,000 strong of all arms and were commanded by General Férey who had posted an infantry and cavalry piquet on his side of the bridge.

On 4 March the Rifles were ordered to advance across the Turones river upon which the French withdrew from their post at Barba del Puerco. The Rifles thereupon forded the Dos Casas, a small river parallel to the Turones and about two miles distant, and occupied Barba del Puerco, but torrential rains set in and as there was no bridge across the Dos Casas, which frequently became impassable, Craufurd ordered the Rifles to fall back to Escarigo in rear of the Turones. On 11 March four Companies of the 95th under Lieutenant-Colonel Beckwith were ordered to advance again and re-occupy Barba del Puerco. This they did and Peter O'Hare's Company was posted at the bridge across the Agueda some 800 yards east of the village. The rest of the Battalion was brought forward to take up the line of the Agueda, and watch the fords across it, four Companies being posted in Villar de Ciervos on the right, six miles south of Barba del Puerco, one Company in Escalhão twelve miles on the left, with one at Almofalla to connect it with Barba del Puerco.

And here it may be as well to describe the expansion of Craufurd's Light Brigade into the Light Division, a matter which has caused no little confusion among military students, not excepting some of those who have served in the famous regiments which composed it.

We have seen how after Talavera Craufurd was given command (in place of Mackenzie who had been killed) of the 3rd Division formed of Donkin's and the Light Brigade. During the autumn and winter various minor changes took place but it was not until 22 February 1810 that a complete re-arrangement of brigades and divisions was ordered and that the command of the 3rd Division was given to Picton, Craufurd retaining command only of the Light Brigade. To this nucleus was now added the 1st Hussars of the King's German Legion, most admirably trained soldiers thoroughly versed in outpost and reconnaissance work between whom and the officers and men of the Rifles as well as of the rest of the Light Brigade there

developed a most sincere friendship, for all alike learned to repose absolute confidence in one another. It was with this small force that Craufurd maintained the long line of outposts extending from Fuente-guinaldo fifteen miles south-west of Ciudad Rodrigo near the northern spurs of the Sierra de Gata on the right, to Escalhão near the valley of the Douro on the left, a front of about forty miles. In rear of this widely strung-out line were Picton's and Hill's Divisions who had orders to support Craufurd should it become necessary, without reference to headquarters. With the exception of the ten Companies of the Rifles dispersed as already described along the line of the Agueda from Villar de Ciervos to Escalhão, some eighteen miles, Craufurd kept his infantry in reserve, the actual task of watching the front being confided to the German Hussars and a few reconnoitring officers.

Now it was that Craufurd was at his very best and was able to give full scope to his unquestionable talent alike as an organizer and leader of light troops in presence of the enemy. In order to make head against any local attack and to assemble his widely-extended force at any required point, he established a perfect system of signalling stations both along the front and with the supports in rear, whereby the movement of any of the enemy's forces was quickly communicated to all parts of the line. The information obtained almost daily from deserters from the French, mostly Italians and Germans, was carefully sifted and duly reported without delay by expert officers and, last but not least, his draconic regulations which had earned for him so much bitter dislike now assured the prompt assembly of his scattered forces. Indeed so quickly and with such certainty could this be done that Craufurd was able to reckon with accuracy the exact hour for the arrival of his supports at any named point.¹ This marvellous pitch of excellence was obtained with the minimum of labour and worry to the troops, at any rate so far as the rank and file were concerned. That the

¹ Shaw-Kennedy (A.D.C. to Craufurd), *Diary of 1810*, pp. 142, 147.

officers had an arduous time of it can be gathered from their letters and journals. Readers of Kincaid's *Random Shots* will recall how the gallant Colonel of the German Hussars, by name Von Arentschildt, in reply to Beckwith's remark that he was "obliged to sleep with one eye open" throughout these strenuous times retorted, "By Gott, I never sleeps at all!"

With such practical training extending over weeks and months it is not surprising that the officers throughout the Light Division became past masters in the art of commanding piquets and posts in the presence of the enemy.

BARBA DEL PUERCO.

It was the fortune of war that this widely extended outpost line of Craufurd's, as if to test its efficacy, should be subjected shortly after its establishment to a very sharp attack. As we have seen, the village of Barba del Puerco was occupied on 11 March by four Companies of the 95th, one Company being on outlying-piquet on the hillside close to the bridge across the Agueda about half a mile in front. The river here runs in a deep chasm over masses of broken rock. The ravine has extremely steep sides and the approaches to the bridge are by narrow paths zigzagging down; the bridge is about 300 feet in length and 15 feet wide. The French daily posted a piquet of about seventy men on the hillside, opposite to and on the same level with that of our Riflemen and only half a mile from it. Now and again the French tried to pick off our men but without success.

On the night of the 19th Captain Peter O'Hare's Company with Lieutenants Mercer and Coane and 2nd Lieutenant Simmons was on outlying piquet and was posted on the high ground west of the bridge. At 8 p.m. O'Hare accompanied by Simmons went to post the sentries for the night. After placing a sergeant and twelve men about

fifty yards from the bridge, he put a double sentry behind a rock about fifteen yards from the bridge with orders, if attacked, to fire and fall back on the sergeant's party, which was to hold its ground if possible until reinforcements came. Simmons crawled across the bridge to see if there was any movement on the French side and, seeing nothing, returned and climbed the hillside to the tent which had been pitched to shelter the officers between the hours of going their rounds. The remainder of the Company was in a little church, the men lying round a wood fire until their turn for duty came at half-past eleven o'clock. O'Hare was taken very unwell about 9 p.m. and as all seemed quiet he went to bed in a house some distance in rear, leaving his three subalterns with the piquet. At about 11 o'clock the officers visiting rounds returned and reported all quiet. The night of the 10th was very dark and stormy with occasional heavy showers of rain and the roar of the torrent in the deep rocky bed of the Agueda effectually prevented any sound of advancing troops being heard by the men on sentry.

Less than three miles eastward at San Felices was Férey's Brigade about 3,000 strong, and its commander decided to take advantage of the bad weather on this night to attempt to surprise the British post at Barba del Puerco. He took with him six companies of *voltigeurs* some 600 strong, all picked men and, leaving a strong reserve of 1,500 men near the eastern approach to the bridge, he sent on the *voltigeurs* who stole across it unseen by the sentries until close upon them. Of the two Riflemen on sentry, by name Maher and M'Can, one only had time to fire before they were felled and captured, one of them being bayoneted and the French began to pour across the bridge. Happily the single shot had given the alarm and the sergeant's piquet opened fire from their post on the rocky hillside. The French returned the fire and the sergeant was shot and the French pressed on, but at this critical moment the remainder of O'Hare's Company some thirty men under Lieutenant Mercer arrived on the scene and a furious interchange

of fire took place at a distance of about fifteen yards. Mercer was shot through the head and fell dead at Simmons' feet. For a few moments at intervals the moon shone brightly and then was obscured by passing clouds. The Riflemen profited by these temporary glimpses of their foes who were clad in their great coats, to fire at their white cross-belts and the glare of the breastplates which in the words of an eye-witness "gave a grand mark for our rifles." Unquestionably the dress of the Riflemen coupled with their being somewhat scattered amid the mass of broken rocks gave them a distinct advantage, else they could never have resisted the heavy fire directed against them. All the time the *voltigeurs* pressed forward most gallantly, their drums beating the famous *pas de charge* while those in support kept up a sharp fire on our men from the far side of the ravine. When Mercer fell Simmons took command and held on for a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile the assailants were surrounding the small party. O'Hare now arrived and the resistance was continued stubbornly for another fifteen minutes. Suddenly Beckwith appeared at the head of two of the Companies in reserve from Barba del Puerco, he had detached the third Company to his right to hold a path from the bridge by which the enemy might outflank him. As the two Companies came up, the men set up a most furious shout and having "fixed swords came on like lions."¹ After a brief but desperate struggle the French were driven down the hill in the greatest confusion, many being forced over the steep crags near the bridge into the torrent leaving behind them a captain and subaltern of the 32nd Léger and twelve men killed and five desperately wounded. Several wounded French officers and many wounded men were carried off by their comrades and their total losses were reckoned at over fifty.

¹ Simmons, p. 63. It is interesting to note that our Riflemen "fixed swords" and charged with them on this and many other occasions. Oman in *Wellington's Army*, p. 303 says "The Rifleman carried no bayonet, his second weapon being a very short and curved sword." They were straight flat-bladed Roman swords (see Plate at p. 14 of this volume) and made useful "bayonets" as do the "swords" now carried in our Army.

O'Hare's weak Company of only fifty-three men which had borne the brunt of the attack suffered considerably, losing one officer and five men killed and seven badly wounded, about a quarter of its strength, whilst the two reserve Companies lost two men killed and eight wounded, the total casualties being twenty-three.

This fight was full of incidents which give a good idea of the severe nature of the struggle and of the temper of the men engaged in it. Mercer just before he fell said to Simmons "Our brave fellows fight like Britons." Three or four of our men now fell and a French officer dashing forward a young Rifleman shot him dead shouting as he did so "Revenge the death of Mr. Mercer." Next moment he himself received seven bullets in his body and fell dead. After the fight, a young French soldier who had just been taken prisoner fired his musket into Beckwith's face, "the ball went through the Colonel's cap peak¹ which was turned up and grazed his head." One of the Riflemen was about to slay the lad when Beckwith said coolly "Knock the thing out of his hand, give him a kick on the bottom and send him to the rear."

James Stewart the Adjutant was engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with two of the French grenadiers but a Rifleman named Ballard shot one and Stewart overpowered the other and took him prisoner. Stewart was especially mentioned by Wellington in despatches and he was recommended for promotion but before it came to him he was killed the following year at Freixeda. In repelling this most determined night attack, the Riflemen stood against nearly treble their number. Six hundred of the *voltigeurs* attacked the bridge and the strength of the three Companies which repulsed them was only 200 men. The weakness of the Companies was due to the havoc which had been wrought

¹ Simmons, p. 55. Yet Oman in *Wellington's Army* p. 300 states that the head-dress of the 95th Rifle Officers was "destitute of the peak."

in the ranks of the 95th by the hardships and disease following on the Talavera Campaign.

This fight opened the campaign of 1810. Wellington wrote to Craufurd¹ expressing his high approval of the conduct of the 95th Rifles, upon which, the stern Craufurd ever sparing of praise, issued the following Divisional order :

Villar de Ciervos,

March 25, 1810.

“ Brigadier-General Craufurd has it in command from the Commander-in-Chief to assure Lieutenant-Colonel Beckwith and the officers of the 95th Regiment who were engaged at Barba del Puerco that their conduct in this affair has augmented the confidence he has in the troops when opposed to the enemy in any situation.

“ Brigadier-General Craufurd feels peculiar satisfaction in noticing the first affair in which any part of the Light Brigade were engaged during the present campaign.

“ That British troops should defeat a superior number of the enemy is nothing new ; but the action reflects honour on Lieutenant-Colonel Beckwith and the Regiment inasmuch as it was of a sort which the riflemen of other armies would shun. In other armies the rifle is considered ill-calculated for close action with an enemy armed with a musket and bayonet ; but the 95th Regiment has proved that the rifle in the hands of a British soldier is a fully sufficient weapon to enable him to defeat the French in the closest fight in whatever manner they may be armed.

“ (Signed) T. Graham, D.A.G.”

Sir Arthur Wellesley also repeatedly mentions this gallant fight in his Despatches and letters. Besides the message thus conveyed by Craufurd, he tells Admiral Hon. G. Berkeley that the French were

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Craufurd 23 March, 1810.

“repulsed in fine style” by the 95th;¹ and in his Despatch reporting it to the Earl of Liverpool he adds that “the affair was highly creditable to Colonel Beckwith and displayed the gallantry and discipline of the officers and troops under his command. The Adjutant, Stewart, distinguished himself.”²

But this discipline which thus elicited the approval of the great Commander was not enforced by Beckwith with sternness or severity. It is recorded how during their halts at Campo Mayor and near the Coa in the preceding winter he had let his Battalion repose from the fatigues of their long marches, and their sufferings from famine and disease; not worrying the soldiers with drills or barrack-yard parades; but rather encouraging amusements and sports which refreshed and re-animated them. This it was, added to their knowledge of his valour and experience when leading them in the field, that made him loved by the officers and Riflemen of his Battalion and made them ready “to follow him cheerfully through fire and water when the day of trial came; for they well knew that he was the last man on earth who would give them unnecessary trouble or, on the other hand would spare either man or officer when the good of the service demanded their utmost exertions.”³

Soon after the attack on Barba del Puerco the Rifles, who had been reinforced by a Company of the 43rd and two Companies of the 52nd, were withdrawn to Villar de Ciervos.

On 3 April orders were received that the ten Companies of which the Battalion on service had hitherto consisted were to be reduced to eight. In consequence on 11 April two captains with six subalterns, some non-commissioned officers, and a few men left for England to form a recruiting depot. The eight Companies remaining were of about a hundred men each, as the Battalion which had embarked a thousand and ten rank and

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Berkeley 26 March, 1810. ² *Ibid.* To Liverpool 28 March.

³ Leach, p. 121.

file had been reduced in about nine months, principally by disease to about eight hundred men in all. On the same day the Chestnut Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, rejoined the Light Brigade and three weeks later another addition to Craufurd's command in the shape of two Battalions of Portuguese Caçadores, known as the 1st and 3rd Battalions, was made. This augmentation had been authorized about two months earlier, the General Order running as follows :—

“The 1st and 2nd Battalion of Portuguese Chasseurs are attached to the brigade of Brigadier-General R. Craufurd, WHICH IS TO BE CALLED THE LIGHT DIVISION.”¹

The 3rd Battalion of Caçadores had, in the interval, been posted to the Division in place of the 2nd Battalion as originally ordered. It was commanded by George Elder who had been one of the original officers of the Experimental Corps of Riflemen first assembled at Horsham in February 1800. The addition of these two *caçador* battalions to the Light Division deserves more than a passing notice since they fought alongside of our Riflemen throughout the remainder of the war and only left in June 1814 after the conclusion of peace when the British Army was in France.²

It was after their arrival that Simmons enters in his Diary on 30 April “The Division is now to be called the *Light* Division in future.” And it is from this time forward that we shall refer to it as the Light Division.

A few weeks later some squadrons of the 14th and 16th Light Dragoons were attached to Craufurd's command.

¹ *Well. Supp. Desp.* vi. p. 486. G. O. of 22 February, 1810.

² A description of them, their uniform, arms and equipment is given in the first chapter of this volume on pp. 10 and 11.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LIGHT DIVISION.

The soul of a fighting Division—Wellington's appreciation of the Light Division—His views of "fighting the French"—The weapon fashioned by Moore and developed by Craufurd—The Regiments of the Light Brigade—The Rifles, the 43rd Light Infantry and the 52nd Light Infantry—Their confidence in one another—The peculiar characteristics of each corps—Craufurd as a leader—His deserved unpopularity at first; the change that came—The men realize the reasons for and the advantages of, his stern rule—Craufurd and the Commissary—The unbounded confidence of the Light Division—Irrepressible cheeriness of Officers—High spirits and recklessness of the men—A very forward Rifleman—The component parts of the Division—The Chestnut Troop—The German Hussars—The British Light Dragoons; the Heavy Dragoons—The Caçadores—Martial appearance of the Light Division.

TO us living a century after the Light Division had been broken up and scattered to the four quarters of the globe by a stroke of the pen it is difficult to realize that it was not similarly created "by order." The bare framework, the skeleton so-to-speak, may have been thus called into existence but the flesh with which it was clothed and above all the spirit which was breathed into it, were not suddenly evoked by any such prosaic methods. We all now know what the Light Division was, who composed it and what it accomplished. It was ever one of the great Wellington's most trusted units, one which he was accustomed to rely upon when any task of exceptional difficulty or danger lay ahead or some disaster had to be retrieved. That he was led to place this absolute confidence in the Division was primarily owing to its perfect organization, peculiar armament and fighting value.

But we Riflemen even in these modern days when every weapon is



"BRITISH OFFICER, 95th REGIMENT, OR RIFLE CORPS,"
ABOUT 1811.

"The 95th are the only Corps of British Riflemen."

*(Enlarged facsimile of the plate in Goddard's "Military Costume of Europe,"
publ. 1832.)*

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rifled and every infantryman carries a rifle and when in consequence the proud and distinctive appellation of "The Rifles" has lost its full force—recall with just pride the deeds of our forebears in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo. For the fact is undeniable, although hotly resented by those of the old school, the Pictons and Coles and many other noble men of their class, that Wellington found in the Light Division the precise weapon which he had evolved in his own mind when he set to work to devise a method of "fighting the French."

His requirements were, a full development of skirmishers to draw and if possible to keep down the fire of the enemy's light troops, with a well-formed two-deep line in support, kept out of sight as much as possible, which, taking advantage of the destruction caused by the skirmishers' fire, could so soon as the range became suitable for the muskets of the day, develop a crushing and enveloping fire on the column formations in which the French invariably fought.

In the three Battalions of the 95th Rifles he found at hand a most perfect body of skirmishers, accustomed to fight by Companies and to take every advantage of ground and above all, armed with a weapon of precision—the Baker rifle. By their aid he obtained a mass of fire which was admitted by friends and foes alike to be infinitely superior to that of any other body of troops in our Army.

But excellent and effective as was this skirmishing line, as was proved by Beckwith at Coruña (where by the way Wellington was *not* present), it only developed its full effect by the perfection of support it obtained from the main fighting body deployed in line two-deep behind it.

It is unnecessary to dilate upon the perfect discipline, calm courage and determination of those splendid regiments, the 43rd Light Infantry and the two Battalions of the 52nd Light Infantry. This spirit of the Light Division is admirably expressed by Kincaid who when recalling how his beloved regiment "fired the first and last shot in almost every

battle, siege, and skirmish in which the Army was engaged during the war," quickly adds: "I beg to be understood as identifying our old and gallant associates, the 43rd and 52nd, as a part of ourselves, for they bore their share in everything, and I love them as I hope to do my better half (when I come to be divided), wherever *we* were, *they* were; and although the nature of our arm generally gave us more employment in the way of skirmishing, yet whenever it came to a pinch, independent of a suitable mixture of them among us, we had only to look behind to see a line, in which we might place a degree of confidence, almost equal to our hopes in heaven, nor were we ever disappointed. There never was a Corps of Riflemen in the hands of such supporters."¹

Another officer, not in the Rifles but who served in the Light Division in the Peninsula, has left us the following sketch of the different types which combined to make up this band of brothers:—

"Though amongst the regiments which composed it there existed an unanimity which was almost without a parallel in war, yet there was a shade of difference between them—a something peculiar to each corps distinguishing it from the others—which was the more remarkable as amongst them there was a sort of fraternal compact, and it has occurred that three brothers held commissions at the same time in the 43rd, 52nd and Rifle Corps.

"The 43rd were a gay set—the dandies of the Army; the great encouragers of dramatic performances, dinner parties and balls of which their headquarters was the pivot.

"The 52nd were highly gentlemanly men of a steady aspect; they mixed little with other corps, but attended the theatricals of the 43rd with circumspect good humour, and now and then relaxed, but were soon again the 52nd.

¹ *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*, p. 16.

“The Rifle Corps were skirmishers in every sense of the word ; a sort of wild sportsmen, and up to every description of fun and good humour. Nothing came amiss : the very trees responded to their merriment, and scraps of their sarcastic rhymes passed current through all the camps and bivouacs.

“In this way the brothers of three regiments met together each being the very type of the corps to which he belonged. Amongst them are to be enumerated the Napiers, the Maddens, the Booths, the Rowans, the Whichcotes, the Maynes, the Dobbs, the Patricksons, the Harvests, and others.”¹

Such was the Division. And now for its famous leader. I have no doubt that some who read the truculent abuse of Craufurd, which I have chosen to repeat, will deplore the fact that I have done so. With such criticism I have no patience. It is ridiculous to endeavour to represent Craufurd as a model officer because his name has become a household word. He was an ambitious and disappointed man, far above the level of most of his comrades in arms, alike in education and as a soldier. But he had a violent and ungovernable temper, and he lived in times when the standard of humanity was entirely different from our own. Moreover he had to deal with a large number of rough men, who according to the accepted ideas of a century ago could only be disciplined and kept in order by fear of the lash. In blaming him as some modern writers have done, I hardly think they have been fair to the man or taken into consideration his surroundings and above all the spirit of the times he lived in. Nor have I shown how heartily at one time he was detested and abused by his officers without a definite object in view. For I propose to prove how, in the words of one of these, “although he was an

¹ *A Narrative of the Events in the South of France*, by Captain J. H. Cooke, late 43rd L. I., 1835.

officer, who for a length of time was better known than liked, like many a gem of purer ray his value was scarcely known till lost." The same authority says : " He had neither judgement, temper, nor discretion to fit him for a chief, but his talents as a general of division were nevertheless of a high order. He received the three British regiments under his command finished by the hands of a master of the art, Sir John Moore, and as regiments they were faultless, but to Craufurd belonged the chief merit of making them the war brigade which they became, alike the admiration of their friends and foes."¹ Kincaid admits that " the General and his Divisional code was at first much disliked, probably he enforced it, in the first instance, with unnecessary severity and it was long before those under him could rid themselves of that feeling of oppression which it had inculcated upon their minds. It is due, however, to the memory of the gallant General to say that punishment for these disorders was rarely necessary after the first campaign, for the system once established went on like clockwork and the soldiers latterly became devotedly attached to him ; for while he exacted from them the most rigid obedience, he was on his own part keenly alive to everything they had a right to expect from him in return, and woe befel the commissary who failed to give a satisfactory reason for any deficiencies in his issues. It is stated that one of them went to the commander-in-chief to complain that he had been unable to procure bread for the Light Division, and that General Craufurd had threatened that if they were not supplied within a given time he would put him in the guard room. ' Did he ? ' said his Lordship, ' then I would recommend you to find the bread, for if he said so by —, he'll do it ! ' " ²

This well-known Light Division story has been ascribed to Picton, who according to the revised version threatened to *hang* his commissary !

¹ *Random Shots*, pp. 43-45.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

The essential difference between the two threats is, that whereas the first was very probable, the second was impossible.

A great factor in war is confidence alike in one's leader and in one's self and this the Light Division unquestionably possessed. Referring to a period when the Light Division according to all authorities "was in as desperate a position as any Lord Wellington had held during the war" Kincaid tells us naïvely "none of us knew anything at all about the matter, and cared still less. We then held as we ever did the most unbounded confidence in our chief, and a confidence in ourselves, fed by continued success, which was not to be shaken, so that we were at all times ready for anything and reckless of everything."¹

Reading the various journals and accounts of those stirring times, it is evident that the Light Division made it always a point of honour to be light-hearted, an immense asset in troublous times as all soldiers know. "Our very privations were a subject of pride and boast to us and there still continued to be an *esprit de corps*, a buoyancy of feeling animating all, which nothing could quell, we were alike ready for the field or for frolic, and when not engaged in the one went headlong into the other." Once during a retreat a barrel of rum was obtained and a ration issued to all hands. "The morrow promised to be a bloody one; but we cared not for the morrow, 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' the song and jest went merrily round."²

This cheery recklessness was by no means confined to the officers. Many are the references to the high spirits and daring of both non-commissioned officers and men. The gallant Private Rifleman who at the battle of Roliça, when our line of skirmishers was held back by a heavy fire from some houses occupied by the French, leapt over the sheltering wall shouting: "Over! boys, Over! Over!" will be recalled.³

¹ *Random Shots*, p. 226.

² *Ibid.*, p. 250.

³ See Part I, p. 152.

Another typical example of bold initiative shown by a soldier during one of the sharp actions which marked Masséna's retreat in 1811, is thus described by Kincaid, who at the time was a recruit officer :—

“We were engaged in a very hot skirmish and had driven the enemy's light troops for a considerable distance with great rapidity, when we were at length stopped by some of their regiments in line which opened such a terrific fire within a few yards that it obliged everyone to shelter himself as best he could among the inequalities of the ground and sprinkling of trees which the place afforded. We remained inactive for about ten minutes amidst a shower of balls that seemed almost like a hail-storm, and when at the very worst, when it appeared to me to be certain death to quit the cover, a young scampish fellow of the name of Priestley, at the adjoining tree, started out from behind it, saying, ‘Well! I'll be d—d if I'll be bothered any longer behind a tree, so here's at you,’ and with that he banged off his rifle in the face of his foes, reloading very deliberately, while every one, right and left, followed his example, and the enemy, panic struck, took to their heels without firing another shot.”¹

William Napier, the historian, who served in the 43rd, and George Napier, his brother,² who was in the 52nd, have happily left equally eloquent records of the fine fighting spirit of the men of these grand Regiments. All readers of Napier will recall his description of how Serjeant MacQuade of the 43rd gave his life to save that of a very youthful officer of his Regiment at the Combat of the Coa. Similar deeds of reckless courage and of calm heroism are happily known throughout every branch of the British Army. But it was the spirit which prompted them, a combination of cheery optimism and willing self-sacrifice which earned for the Light Division its name and fame.

¹ *Random Shots*, pp. 92-93.

² General Sir George Napier, K.C.B.

Most closely connected with the three British regiments of the Light Division was the brigade of Horse Artillery under Captain Hew Ross, known throughout the Army as the famous "Chestnut Troop" and later as A Battery of the A Brigade of our Royal Horse Artillery, "the right of the line" of the British Army. It may be well to repeat here once again that, although in the times we write of the Field Artillery unit of six guns was known as a "battery," in the Horse Artillery it was styled a "brigade." But whether we refer to it as the "brigade" or the "battery" or the "Chestnut Troop" its services were one continuous record of fine courage, steadfastness and devotion. Our Riflemen, as did their comrades in the Light Infantry, viewed the gallant horse gunners as part of themselves and this feeling was returned. There are numerous instances of the steadfast endurance of the Chestnut Troop and of their accepted policy of always holding on to the last possible moment to check an overwhelming advance or to distract or mitigate a destructive artillery fire, whilst on the other hand there were many occasions when our men by their sheer obstinate defence and readiness to lend a hand ensured the safe withdrawal of the guns in moments of supreme danger. When the Light Division attacked, the guns of the Chestnut Troop were frequently thrust forward into the infantry fighting line.

No more eloquent testimony to the true and abiding friendship existing between the various component parts of Craufurd's Light Division could be adduced than the fact that from those far-off days to the present time the officers of the Chestnut Troop and those of the Rifle Brigade and the 43rd and 52nd (now known as the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire) Light Infantry have been and still are, members of one another's messes: their right to the same being that the several corps elected one another to enjoy the privilege "for ever" !

Another integral part of the Light Division which unfortunately was lost to us when, upon the accession of Queen Victoria, owing to

the operation of the Salic law Hanover became separated from Great Britain and Ireland, was the "1st Regiment of Hussars" of the King's German Legion. This corps was raised in 1805 when, Napoleon having seized upon Hanover, many of the loyal subjects of King George III joined the "King's German Legion" then formed. This regiment was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel von Arentschildt, a most excellent Hanoverian officer, thoroughly versed in war. Under him the regiment attained to a high degree of excellence in the field not only as a fighting unit or proved courage and determination but in the far wider and more important duties of light cavalry work and reconnaissance, which requires in addition to personal valour a knowledge of war and of country and supreme coolness and self-reliance when on detached duties. These, the Hussars combined with thorough discipline, and, last but not least, good horse-mastership. The feeling of absolute confidence they inspired is well told by Kincaid who as a young officer taking his tour of outpost duty for five years must have repeatedly experienced what he describes. "They (the 1st Hussars) were no less daring in the field than they were surpassingly good on out-post duty . . . If we saw a British Dragoon at any time approaching at full speed, it excited no great curiosity among us, but whenever we saw one of the 1st Hussars coming on at a gallop, it was high time to gird on our swords and bundle. Their chief too, was a perfect soldier and worthy of being the leader of such a band, for he was to them what the gallant Beckwith was to us—a father, as well as a leader!"¹

Numerous are the good stories told of the jovial von Arentschildt, whose struggles with the English language afforded incessant merriment to the graceless young officers of the Division. Unfortunately some of the best are, as usual in such cases, difficult to print and must be left to the imagination.

¹ *Random Shots*, p. 162.

Our British regiments of cavalry have many splendid deeds to their credit during the Peninsular War, but all who read their inner story will realize how often some of them got into trouble, a fact which caused Wellington to remark on the want of "experience" evinced by his cavalry and the indecisive results which so often followed on their action. Captain Tomkinson of the 16th Light Dragoons in his *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, one of the best books among the many dealing with the Peninsular War, makes it clear how and why more was not accomplished. Three British cavalry regiments from time to time worked with the Light Division. The one which did most service with it was the 14th Light Dragoons whose colonel, Talbot, was a particularly able officer and who was slain in an unfortunate minor reconnaissance near Ciudad Rodrigo in 1810. The 16th Light Dragoons did some fine work in the Bussaco campaign, especially a squadron under Captain Somers Cocks, a most enterprising officer who was killed at Burgos in 1812. Lastly, the 1st Royal Dragoons did duty at one time with the Division and there are instances of their having carried our Riflemen behind them both in pursuit of the French and in hurried retirements.

Sometimes the cavalry acting with the Division would relieve our men of their heavy packs in order that they might keep pace with the horsemen. The arrangement worked well at times but was disliked by our Riflemen on the prosaic grounds that should a Dragoon or his horse be shot, the knapsacks carried were in either case lost to their owners! On the other hand, should a Rifleman be wounded and lost sight of, his kit went ahead with the Dragoons and he was thus deprived of his small comforts at the time he needed them most.

Lastly we have the two regiments of Portuguese Caçadores known as the 1st and 3rd, which formed part of the Light Division for over four years. It is on record that the best understanding existed between these regiments and the rest of the Light Division. They were brought to the highest order and had an excellent character for bravery. This

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Kincaid ascribes, no doubt with justice, "to the activity and gallantry of the British officers who organized and led them."

All who have read about the conduct of the Portuguese levies in the early years of the Peninsular War¹ will realize the change that came over the men when they were, as in the case of the Caçadores, well-officered and well-disciplined. Wellington himself testified to the valour of the Portuguese when he described how, in 1813, they had become "the fighting cocks of the Army."²

It is rare to find any account of the general appearance of a military body, such as the Light Division on active service, for the reason that those serving with it are the very last to have opportunities for such a spectacle. Hence the following account written by an officer with a draft recently arrived from England when he first set eyes on the famous Light Division on the march in 1811 is of some interest.

"In the distance we descried a cloud of dust rolling towards us, the bright sparkling rays of the sunbeams playing on the soldiers' breastplates, when suddenly the leading Regiment of the Light Division burst forth, their bronzed countenances and light knapsacks, and their order of march all united to inspire a conviction that their early discipline had not only been maintained amidst privations, battles and camps, but had become matured by experience Seven Battalions of Light Infantry and Riflemen defiled before us with their threadbare jackets, their brawny necks loosened from their stocks, their wide and patched trowsers of various colours, and brown-barrelled arms slung over their shoulders or carelessly held in their hands, whilst a joyous buzz ran through the cross-belted ranks as their soldier-like faces glanced towards us to greet many of their old comrades now about to join in their arduous toils after a long separation."³

¹ Costello, p. 31, is very severe on the Caçadores when they first joined the British Army.

² *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 25 July, 1813.

³ Captain J. H. Cooke, quoted in *Historical Records of the 43rd*, p. 155.

CHAPTER VII.

OPERATIONS ON THE COA, 1810.

Napoleon's orders for the invasion of Portugal—Masséna invests Ciudad Rodrigo—The Light Division takes up the line of the Azava—Affair at Gallegos, 4 July—Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo—Skirmish near Barquilla—Disastrous charge of 14th Light Dragoons and death of Colonel Talbot—Severe criticisms on Craufurd—Wellington's view of the matter—His censure on camp scribes—The Light Division holds the line of the Dos Casas and covers Almeida—Craufurd's orders to withdraw west of the Coa—Ney advances in force, 21 July—Craufurd declines to retire—Ney's attack on 24 July—Vigorous advance of French—Critical position of Craufurd—He falls back on the Coa—The Rifles and 43rd cover the retirement—Ney's repeated attempts to storm the Bridge repulsed—Losses of the Rifles in the fight—Lieutenant M'Culloch's adventures—Edward Costello's escape—The Light Division falls back on Valverde—Criticisms on Craufurd's management of the fight—Failure of Picton to support Craufurd—Unfortunate jealousies—Wellington's high praise of the 43rd, 52nd and 95th—His implied censure of Craufurd.

NAPOLEON'S final orders to Masséna at Salamanca were that the invasion of Portugal should be carried out methodically, the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida which barred the route he had selected for the advance being first captured.

Masséna it may be here remarked was by far the most capable of Napoleon's Marshals but he was, although only fifty-two, showing unmistakable signs of being past his prime, due no doubt to the strenuous life he had led in campaigns innumerable, for he had served for fourteen years as a Private and N.C.O. in the French Royal Army prior to the Revolution and had been actively employed ever since. See Map XX, p. 298.

On 30 May Ney arrived before Ciudad Rodrigo with his Corps and a division of cavalry, altogether 30,000 strong. On this day

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Junot, who had left a division at Ledesma to support Ney and sent detachments to Zamora on the Douro forty miles on his right and to the Pass of Los Baños an equal distance on the left to protect his flanks, pushed on with a division to San Felices on the line of the Agueda.

On 1 June Ney bridged the Agueda one and a half miles above Ciudad Rodrigo and on the 5th he threw a second bridge below the fortress and sent across a division and a half of infantry and some light cavalry. This threatened Wellington's outpost line which now fell back to the Azava. To watch his front, by the middle of May Wellington had collected in the district between Almeida and Celorico 18,000 British troops and 14,000 Portuguese. In advance of his force was Craufurd's Light Division guarding the line of the Azava. Almeida was held by a Portuguese force of 5,000 men and Fort Concepción, a small Spanish work on the Turones opposite to Almeida, was repaired and made defensible. To recapitulate, when Masséna actually set to work during the second week in June to reduce Ciudad Rodrigo, he had about 47,000 men at hand or within two days' call, whereas Wellington's force only numbered 36,000 English and Portuguese with 3,000 Spanish troops of La Romana on the upper Agueda.

The time had now come when almost every day gave opportunities for our men to put their long training and varied experience as light troops in presence of the enemy to the test, and I shall now give in detail the manner of life led by our gallant fellows during these strenuous times. On 21 April the various positions held by the Light Brigade were as follows: The 43rd had seven companies at Villar de Ciervos and three on the Dos Casas, the 52nd were at the villages of Val de la Mula and Malpartida and the Rifle Corps at San Pedro and Villar Formoso with one company with the 52nd. On this day Craufurd held an inspection of the Light Brigade on the heights near Fort Concepción.

So far as I can gather, this was the last occasion when the "Light

Brigade" is mentioned, the Divisional Order to style it the Light Division, in compliance with the General Orders of 22 February, being dated 30 April.

On 29 April half the Battalion marched to Gallegos and halt to Espeja, two villages about four miles apart and ten miles from Ciudad Rodrigo. On this day some French cavalry crossed the Agueda below Ciudad Rodrigo whilst about 4,000 French infantry showed on the heights beyond it. On 7 May Craufurd held an inspection of his Light Division, after which the various units were redistributed along the front. Now ensued a period of watchful waiting. Leach as usual took occasion when off duty to go out with his gun. On 8 May he notes "Rambled in the woods, shot an whoopo and a cucko,¹ desperate sport!" a few days later he enters "Nothing going on owing to the damnable rain" and on 26th he writes "I must make a remark amongst some others on this rascally country that for the last four months with the exception of *a few days* we have had nothing but tremendous rain." Other journals allude to the extraordinary wetness of the Spring of 1810.

During May the Rifles were posted at Fuentes de Oñoro in advance of the Turones River and behind the Dos Casas, a place which a year later was destined to become famous for all time as the scene of the famous battle. On 13 June owing to suspicious movements of the French on the previous evening, which led Craufurd to suspect that an attempt to cross the Agueda was imminent, the Rifles marched at 3 a.m., arriving at Gallegos at 5 a.m. where the whole Division was assembled. Nothing however occurred and they returned to Fuentes at 9 a.m. The next day four companies were again sent to Gallegos and four to Espeja, taking up a line of piquets along the Azava. From Gallegos there was a good view of the French encampment about Ciudad Rodrigo. The 43rd came to Gallegos from Alameda on the 16th and there was

¹ The hoopoe and cuckoo are both spring migrants arriving in Spain in March and April. Leach was a most observant sportsman altho' somewhat uncertain of the nomenclature of birds.

some skirmishing between our German cavalry and the French dragoons both on this and subsequent days. About 10 a.m. on 21 June several French cavalry regiments showed in front and the Division was under arms for two hours until they withdrew. An hour later the French cavalry advanced in force and took possession of the village of Carpio, our Hussar piquet there falling back before them. At sunset the French withdrew and our piquets reoccupied Carpio and the other posts. The net result was to keep the Light Division under arms for the whole day. This sort of harassing duty continued; on 25 June much the same tactics were repeated, the enemy driving in our Hussars and taking possession of the ridge of heights east of the Azava and posting strong dragoon piquets along his front. The advanced piquets of the Rifles were at the bridge of Marialva and along the heights up to Molino dos Flores. On this day the French batteries opened on Ciudad Rodrigo and later on there was a big explosion in the French siege train caused by a shell from the fortress.

Two squadrons of the 16th Light Dragoons (now the 16th Lancers) joined the Light Division on this day. During the next ten days the bombardment was carried on without intermission and on the 26th the fortress replied "with great fury." From a hill near Gallegos our Riflemen were able to see "every shot fired by both parties most distinctly with the naked eye."¹ On 27 June the enemy's cavalry demonstrated against the Marialva piquets about eleven o'clock and the Light Division turned out in consequence for the second time that day. So the siege wore on, the town being set on fire in several places on the 28th.

On 4 July Masséna considered it advisable to push back the Light Division which had been observing the line of the Azava only six miles in rear of his investing troops, whose presence had been

¹ Leach, MS. *Journal*.

a constant menace to him since it afforded a screen behind which Wellington might at any moment assemble a force for the relief of the fortress. On this day he in consequence sent out a division of cavalry supported by a brigade of infantry.

The British cavalry covering the front of the Light Division consisting of the two squadrons of the 16th Light Dragoons were driven in at daybreak and retired on Gallegos where Craufurd had already assembled the Light Division on the heights. The advancing French cavalry now came under the fire of Ross's H.A. guns which opened with both round-shot and shrapnel and did considerable execution. There were also some minor cavalry combats, in which the King's German Hussars made a very successful little charge. The retirement on Fort Concepción was now commenced, under cover of our cavalry and the Rifles. At the crossing of the Turones the French were again held up and Simmons describes the amusement caused by a body of French *Grénadiers à cheval* which dismounted and leaving their horses in the village of Alameda "trotted off in their big jack boots and large hairy caps as light infantry to skirmish with us."¹ The retirement was carried out to Fort Concepción where two Companies of Rifles were left with a small party of Engineers with orders to blow up the place, should the French advance. The British cavalry took up a line on the Dos Casas from Fuentes de Oñoro to Aldea del Obispo, the Division occupying a position near Val de la Mula. In this day's retirement Craufurd was seen at his best as a cool and capable Commander of light troops and the "Affair at Gallegos" as it came to be styled, has ever been cited in Text-books on Minor Tactics, as a model of its kind. More especially did the British cavalry distinguish itself on this day, holding up an enemy over five times as numerous. The retirement was carried out across some ten miles of very open country, during which time Craufurd was

¹ Simmons, p. 72.

constantly outflanked by the French cavalry, with a loss of five men wounded only. The French loss was returned as five officers and twenty men.¹

On 7 July Craufurd ordered two Companies from each Regiment in the Light Division to practise with ball cartridge. Needless to say this order like every other the General issued which was considered to be contrary to the time-honoured customs of the Service was severely criticized. Leach (of course), when noting it, adds “which appears an *odd whim* to expend ammunition at a *Target* when we are only a league distant from *eighty four thousand* Frenchmen.”

After Craufurd's withdrawal from the line of the Azava Masséna pressed the siege and the Spaniards after a fine defence surrendered on 10 July. Craufurd meanwhile had been chafing at the sight of the French patrols and foraging parties in the villages east of the Dos Casas river and planned an attack on them. At 11 o'clock on the night of the 10th before he knew of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo he took out a force consisting of seven Companies of the 95th Rifles with two of the 52nd Light Infantry, three squadrons of the 14th and two of the 16th Light Dragoons, and one of the King's Germans with two of Ross's guns. With these he crossed the Dos Casas under cover of darkness and, leaving the Rifles and 52nd with the two guns concealed in the high standing corn near Barquilla and Villar del Puerco, he posted his six squadrons, also concealed, in advance of them. Soon after daylight a party of about fifty French horsemen followed by some 200 infantry were seen moving across the plain on Barquilla and Villar de Ciervos and Craufurd at once ordered the cavalry to cut them off. Moving in haste our horsemen got into disorder in some enclosed ground and, on emerging from a defile, suddenly came upon the French infantry which had meanwhile formed square. Half of the German squadron at once charged but was received with a sharp fire which caused them

¹ Oman, vol. iii, p. 251.

a loss of eleven men and ten horses. Craufurd now ordered them to leave the infantry and follow up the enemy's cavalry. This the Germans and 16th did, capturing about thirty-five French horsemen. The leading squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons now came up and Craufurd ordered it to charge the French square. It was a most unfortunate command for the French received the attack with the utmost steadiness and Colonel Talbot commanding the 14th, a peculiarly fine officer and eight of his men, were shot dead when close up to the bayonets, twenty-three men were wounded and the squadron broken. Before the two remaining squadrons of the 14th could be formed up, some horsemen were seen moving from Barquilla and Craufurd, thinking they were French, ordered the 14th to cut off their retreat. The supposed French cavalry turned out to be some of our own cavalry which had been detached to a flank earlier. The French Commander, Captain Gouache, with the greatest promptness took the opportunity of this minor diversion to run his men into some broken and enclosed ground near the village of Sexmeiro hard-by, whence he eventually withdrew them across the river and joined his command.

Had Craufurd used even a single squadron of his ample cavalry force to ride for and seize the ford of the Azava in rear of the French a single Company of our Riflemen coming on could have accounted easily for the gallant French infantry. Small wonder that Leach wrote "It appears incredible that 200 French infantry on a plain surrounded by nearly 1,000 British dragoons and fully 800 British infantry not more than a mile distant should escape without the loss of a man!" Judging from other journals of eye-witnesses of this unfortunate affair it would seem that Craufurd made a most grievous mistake.

But although the opinion of the officers under Craufurd was thus so overwhelmingly against his conduct on this occasion it is only right to record that Wellington, to whom the matter was eventually referred, owing to some irresponsible criticisms of the action of the

cavalry, took a different view. He maintained that such an attempt as Craufurd's, undertaken close to a powerful and enterprising enemy, could only succeed as a *coup de main* and that the accidents and delays caused by the approach of supposed hostile cavalry was the cause of the escape of the infantry and disarranged the whole plan.

In fact Wellington took the broad view that in warlike operations accidents constantly happen and that in this instance Craufurd's "failure arose from bad luck and various unfortunate accidents which could not be prevented."¹ Many soldiers who read this and who have seen war will appreciate the correctness of Wellington's dictum. Indeed his words on this occasion are of such serious import that it would be well if every officer in our Army knew them. "I have never seen an attack by our troops in which similar if not greater mistakes and accidents have not occurred and in which orders have not been given for which no authority had proceeded from the Commander and in which there was not corresponding accidents and failures. . . . All this would not much signify if our Staff and other officers would mind their business instead of writing news and keeping coffee houses. But as soon as an accident happens, every one who can write, and who has a friend who can read, sits down to write his account of what he does not know and his comments on what he does not understand."

On 12 July the French entered Fuentes de Oñoro and the Light Division fell back on the 14th to Junça a small village in some rocky country three miles south of Almeida and on the same ridge.

The British cavalry were now observing a line on the Dos Casas with infantry piquets on the road to Val de la Mula, two Companies of the 95th Rifles under O'Hare, being left as before at Fort Concepcion to blow it up upon the French advancing. Almeida was strongly garrisoned and was well-provided to stand a siege, for after the fall of

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Craufurd, 23 July, 1810. See also Simmons, pp. 73-74; Costello, pp. 34-35; Tomkinson, pp. 30-31; Leach, pp. 140-148, also MS. *Journals* of Leach and Simmons.

Ciudad Rodrigo it became the one remaining barrier to the invasion of Portugal by Masséna. With Ciudad Rodrigo in the hands of the French the object of Craufurd's remaining in advance of Almeida no longer existed. Wellington in consequence wrote to him from Alverca on the 11th "In case the enemy should *threaten* to attack . . . I do not wish to risk anything beyond the Coa." A few days later on the 16th he repeated this caution in almost identical words and again on the 22nd he wrote "I am not desirous of engaging an affair beyond the Coa. . . . would it not be better that you should come to this side with your infantry at least?" Craufurd, however, strong in his faith in the powers of his Light Division to fight and retire, remained obstinately at Val de la Mula east of the Coa.

At dawn on 21 July Ney advanced in force against Craufurd's outposts driving in the cavalry piquets along the Turones and out of Val de la Mula. Craufurd at once sent the Rifles with Ross's guns to some high ground one and a half miles east of Almeida to support the cavalry and ordered the mines at Fort Concepção to be fired. The two Companies under O'Hare now rejoined the Battalion. The next day Craufurd again fell back to the heights near Junça still east of the Coa. Here he remained throughout the 22nd and 23rd in defiance of Wellington's unmistakeably expressed orders (or advice as Craufurd apparently construed it to be) to withdraw the Light Division west of the Coa, still holding on to his small advanced post of one Company of the Rifles on the plateau east of Almeida and with his cavalry vedettes in front watching the Turones. Meanwhile reports reached our piquets daily that the French were concentrating large bodies of men in all the villages across the frontier, and, judging from the journals of officers, there seems to be no doubt that all ranks in the Light Division realized that they might be attacked by an overwhelming force at any hour.

Ney halted at Val de la Mula and remained there throughout this critical period, only three miles distant from Craufurd. It is useless to

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attempt to extenuate Craufurd's conduct in thus ignoring Wellington's plainly expressed wishes, yet one cannot withhold one's admiration from him for his hardihood and confidence in himself and his gallant Division in thus remaining for two whole days in face of a powerful French corps of all arms. There can be no doubt that had he been able subsequently to withdraw with small loss, his conduct would have been handed down for all time as an example of supreme courage and British tenacity in the face of overwhelming odds. But the fortune of war willed it otherwise.

Almeida stands on a plateau over 200 feet above the Coa which runs through a deep rocky valley about two miles west of it. The only bridge, that by which Craufurd's line of retreat lay, is full two and a half miles south-west of the fortress and owing to the steep slopes of the valley is neither visible from, nor is it commanded by, the guns of the fortress. The country is very much broken and intersected by dry stone walls surrounding vineyards and other enclosures.

Ney had no doubt got information of the defile across the Coa in Craufurd's rear and so decided to attack sharply and endeavour to cut off his small force. Before daylight on the 24th he had massed his two cavalry brigades in front, and in rear of them in line of columns was Loison's Division consisting of thirteen battalions of infantry. In support was Mermet's Division of eleven battalions with nine battalions of Marchand's Division in reserve,—a total of sixteen squadrons and thirty-three battalions or 24,000 men all told.

About 9 p.m. on 23 July a tremendous thunderstorm accompanied by torrents of rain came on and Simmons describes how neither officers nor men of the Light Division who were in bivouac on the open hill-side outside of the fortress had any shelter during this inclement night, whilst the water running in gutters among the rocks made it impossible to lie down, he himself "sitting on a stone like a drowned rat." As soon as day broke our men set to work to clean their rifles and tend to their ammunition. Whilst they were thus employed firing

was heard at the outposts and our cavalry vedettes were seen to be retiring.

The British advanced post on the road to Val de la Mula consisting of Captain Hon. J. Stewart's Company of the Rifles and two guns fell back with all speed to an old stone windmill tower about 600 yards south-east of the fortress. Here was posted a half-company of the 52nd. The French cavalry pressed in on the retreating Riflemen. Lieutenant M'Culloch with about a dozen of our men were caught in the open, being cut off and taken prisoners. Captain O'Hare's Company was now ordered up to support Stewart's withdrawal and took post among some ruined walls, opening a very sharp fire which checked the approaching swarm of French tirailleurs. Soon the main French attack developed and a line of fifteen squadrons of cavalry were seen to be advancing across the open ground two miles east of the fortress whilst on the south of these were dense masses of infantry estimated by Craufurd at 7,000 and which proved to be Loison's Division. It is the deliberate opinion of many who were present on this day that had Craufurd even now withdrawn his force, he might have crossed the river with little loss. But he decided to stand and make a rear-guard fight of it. So it was he ordered the 43rd to form up on the left next to the windmill tower, with the 1st and 3rd Portuguese Caçadores in the centre and the 52nd on the right, the Rifles being distributed along the line, the bulk of them with the 43rd and the Caçadores.¹

The line thus taken up seems to have extended from a point 700 yards from the outworks of the fortress for about a mile and a half along the road to Junça where its right rested on the steep and broken rocky ravines leading down to the gorge of the Coa, which was in furious flood and unfordable after the heavy rainstorm of the previous night. All accounts agree that over two hours elapsed before the French main attack came on,² ample time for Craufurd to withdraw

¹ *Records of the 52nd*, Moorsom, pp. 119-120.

² *Well. Supp. Desp.* vi, p. 563.

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his guns and baggage as well as his cavalry, which was far too weak to make any stand against two French brigades of that arm.

It is most difficult to follow in the various accounts exactly what now occurred but it is certain that when the French attack developed, it took the form of an unusually heavy line of skirmishers supported by numerous columns which advanced with great resolution. That the attack was vigorously pressed is testified by Simmons who has left a most graphic description of the gallantry of the Frenchmen who "although driven back by the first fire, came on again yelling, the drums beating, frequently the drummers leading. Often in front of the line French officers, like mountebanks running forward and placing their hats on their swords and capering about like madmen, saying as they turned to their men "Come on children of our Country. The first that advances, Napoleon will recompense him."

Our men replied with a very brisk fire and kept back the enemy for a short time, the attack however was renewed with vigour and soon the fighting became furious. The right wing of the 43rd was drawn up behind a wall about 100 yards in rear of our Riflemen. By one of those mischances of war which have so often occurred the Portuguese gunners on the ramparts of Almeida, apparently mistaking the dark green uniform of the retreating Riflemen for French troops closing on the British, sent a shell among them which killed and wounded several. The order was now given to retire by half-companies and O'Hare withdrew part of his Company leaving the other half under Lieutenant Johnston to hold back the French. It was at this critical moment that a squadron of the French 3rd Hussars swept round the left flank of our Riflemen across the open ground between the British force and the fortress and, although fired on by its guns, got in among our men and cut down and captured not a few. Great was the confusion but the 43rd, as ever, came to our aid and fired a volley into the daring French horsemen which emptied many saddles. In O'Hare's Company eleven

men were killed and forty-five taken prisoners many of these being wounded. One officer and eleven men of this Company only escaped. The victorious career of the Hussars was finally checked by some stone walls and a number of them were shot down as described.

Craufurd's position was now most critical for, in addition to having his left flank thus turned, columns of the enemy were seen marching round his right flank and thus threatening to cut off his line of retreat across the bridge ; some guns also were pushed forward and opened with effect on our sorely out-numbered infantry. He thereupon ordered the guns and cavalry to gallop down the paved road leading to the bridge and the Caçadores to follow them, the three British Regiments making a rear-guard fight of it ; the 52nd on the right to hold on at all costs whilst the withdrawal took place, which was to be in echelon from the left.

Such was Craufurd's plan but the furious attacks of the French made in overwhelming numbers quickly caused the fighting to become purely a matter of Companies, each one doing its best for itself and its neighbours amid the broken and intersected ground. The difficulty of reaching the bridge was greatly aggravated by the steepness of the hill-side, since the road in order to maintain a gradient passable by wheeled vehicles led down to the river about 500 yards above the bridge where it turned sharply and ran parallel with it to the point of crossing. Owing to this fact the guns, baggage and horsemen had to travel further than the infantry who made their way straight across country scrambling down the steep slopes and dropping over the numerous walls. By evil chance a tumbril was capsized at the sharp elbow and caused a temporary block. So it was that a good many of the 1st Caçadores reached the bridge before the mounted branches had crossed over and added considerably to the confusion.

The withdrawal down the hill was no easy matter, Leach has described how the Rifles extended a covering party right and left of

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the road but no sooner did the retirement commence than "all was confusion." The French skirmishers were reinforced and came on like "swarms of bees" and our men were "hunted down the mountains like deer." Leach states that the Rifles and 43rd disputed the ground, taking about two hours to retire to the bridge and that when he sighted it, about half the Division had got across. During the retirement a half-battalion of the 43rd found its progress barred at one time by a high dry stone wall. In this predicament the officers and men set to work and succeeded by means of a combined "shove" in toppling it over and, regaining their freedom of movement, soon got into action again. As the rear-guard neared the bridge the French closed in and a most severe fire was concentrated on our men from every rock and wall around. Fortunately a long, low, sandy hillock overgrown with scattered firs to some extent covered the passage of the bridge and this was held on to grimly by the 95th and the left wing of the 43rd under Captain Chris. Patrickson as well as by some of the 52nd and the withdrawal continued.

Craufurd had meanwhile got his guns into position on the hillside across the river and also had posted there some of the 3rd Caçadores under Elder, whose fire was of much help. He now ordered the withdrawal of the party of the Rifles which had hitherto kept the enemy's fire from bearing on the bridge. The French quickly seized this point, the sandy hillock, and poured in a heavy fire. At this critical moment it was discovered that a wing of the 52nd which had been making such an obstinate defence amid the broken spurs on the right had not yet crossed the bridge and was in grave peril of being cut off by the French who were pushing down to the river bank. Colonel Beckwith of his own initiative at once ordered the Riflemen to retake the hill and Major M'Leod of the 43rd putting himself at the head of some 200 skirmishers of the 43rd and 95th charged the enemy in a most gallant manner and checked them in their advance until the 52nd had re-crossed the bridge.

The last stand east of the river was made by about fifty of the Rifles and an equal number of the 43rd. Leach describes how in the last five minutes both the officers of his Company were wounded (Harry Smith¹ and Tom Smith). He had just time to get them carried off and as soon as they were clear over the bridge, "we dashed over the hills skilter-Devil-take-the-hindmost. The French in a second occupied the hill which we left, blazed into us and made damnable work among us. On the bridge stood two Artillery cars. An officer of Artillery cried out 'Don't let me lose my tumbrils. Stand by me, Riflemen.' Our boys lined the battlements of the bridge keeping up a constant fire whilst he got his horses harnessed and got clear off. Then away we went and ascended the heights on the other side." It would be hard to imagine a more narrow shave for all arms! Yet the whole force was withdrawn and even the half-company of the 52nd posted at the windmill which had been cut off by the Hussars' charge, after remaining there concealed until dark, managed, thanks to the skill of the commander, to effect their retreat during the night across the Coa to Pinhel.

But Ney was not the man to relinquish his grip on a retreating enemy. True he had given the Light Division a severe trouncing and had inflicted on it a loss of over 300 men in killed, wounded and prisoners with but trifling loss to himself. He now decided to attempt to storm the bridge, a narrow one some seventy yards long and spanning the rocky defile through which the flooded Coa was on this day rushing furiously. Craufurd had, as we have seen, placed his guns on the hillside above, whence they enfiladed the bridge and commanded its approaches. The Caçadores were already posted behind the stone walls above the bridge and the Rifles as they crossed over distributed themselves among the rocks, broken ground and walls on the left bank, Cameron's Company occupying an old ruined house

¹ Afterwards Lieutenant-General Sir H. Smith, the victor of Alirral.

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whence his fire was peculiarly destructive. The 43rd and 52nd were equally well posted and the cavalry was sent to watch the fords near Castello Bom six miles to the south.

Ney first ordered the 66th, the leading regiment of Loison's Division, to force the passage and "a party of grenadiers headed by an officer in the most gallant manner possible charged over the bridge. The officer who headed the party crossed unhurt followed by four others who attempted to ascend the heights, he was shot on this side and most of his men. I fired at him myself with my little rifle (which still stands my friend) and cursed my stupidity for missing him." So writes Leach, adding regretfully "but a running person is not easily hit." Needless to say this gallant attempt was met by a terrible fire at close range from Craufurd's well posted guns and infantry and had to be discontinued.

Ney now ordered a *corps d'élite* of *chasseurs*, only 300 strong, to take the bridge at all costs. It is on record that in less than ten minutes four officers and eighty-six men were killed and three officers and 144 men wounded and the bridge was literally choked with dead and dying as high as the parapets. Not content with this slaughter Ney ordered the unfortunate 66th to renew the attack but this was easily beaten back. This Regiment lost its Colonel and fifteen officers. Throughout the remainder of the day a desultory fire was kept up from both sides. Towards sunset very few of the rifles or muskets would go off owing to the incessant rain. A French officer advanced waving a white handkerchief and asked for permission to remove their wounded as the approaches to the bridge were strewn with them. This was granted.¹

The French losses during the day were seven officers and 110 men killed, and seventeen officers and 393 men wounded, a total of 527, of

¹ John Cox, MS. *Journal*.

which four-fifths were incurred at the bridge.¹ The British loss in this hard-fought combat was four officers and thirty-two men killed, and twenty-three officers and 191 men wounded, whilst one officer and eighty-two men were missing, a total of 333 all ranks. The losses of the Rifles were Captains Creagh and Samuel Mitchell, Lieutenants Mathew Pratt, Peter Reilly, Alexander Coane and Thomas Smith, and 2nd Lieutenant George Simmons, all severely wounded, and Lieutenant Harry Smith slightly wounded. Lieutenant Donald McLeod and eleven Riflemen were killed. Of the wounded, Creagh, Reilly and Pratt died. One Sergeant and fifty-four Riflemen were wounded, of whom several died. Lieutenant M'Culloch and one Sergeant and fifty-two Riflemen were "missing." Of these, M'Culloch and many were wounded and fell into the hands of the enemy. M'Culloch refused to give his parole and subsequently on the march to France as a prisoner of war was confined in a private house in Valladolid. Here his handsome person and wounds attracted the pity of a young lady of the family, who laid plans for his escape, and with the assistance of an Irish Professor at the University procured him the costume of a Spanish peasant and he departed with a supply of dollars and, according to Kincaid, "a kiss on each cheek burning hot from the lips of his preserver on the high road to join his battalion where he arrived in due course of time to the great joy of everybody. Lord Wellington himself was not the least delighted of the party and kindly invited him to dine with him that day in the *costume* in which he had arrived."²

Several other interesting episodes of this fight have come down to us. Costello who published in 1852 his quaint book of *Memoirs* was a private Rifleman in O'Hare's Company and when the French Hussars got among our men he was seized by the collar by one of them but his

¹ Oman, vol. iii, p. 264. See also note on p. 265 with extracts from Ney's Despatches to Napoleon and Masséna's deliberate falsification of the same.

² *Random Shots*, pp. 75-76.

captor was shot and he got away. A few minutes later he received a musket ball below the knee. Another Rifleman, named Little, dragged him along towards the bridge when a second French ball smashed Little's arm and lodged in Costello's thigh. Another of our men however got him across the bridge and he escaped capture. Writing in 1852 Costello says "this ball may be this hour felt with as much ease as the first day it entered forty-two years back."¹

Costello relates also how a Rifleman named Charity was "knocked down by the Hussars and received two sabre cuts when on the ground, one in the head and another in the stern" as well as a bullet through the arm "probably from the 52nd." He however survived and in after years was a Chelsea Pensioner.² George Simmons, who was also in O'Hare's Company and was likewise attacked by the Hussars, whom he describes as wearing "bearskin caps and light coloured pelisses," says he was protected from their sabres by his boat cloak which he was wearing strapped round his body and a full haversack! He was subsequently badly wounded in the charge to retake the sandy hill by the bridge.³

It was inevitable that a fight of the nature of the Coa should cause much discussion among the soldiers of Wellington's army. How strenuous was the action may be judged by the fact that "from its commencement at six in the morning till four there was no cessation even for a second." The comparatively small losses of the Light Division were attributed by those present to the small use made by the

¹ In July 1909 I was shown this bullet together with Costello's medals by his son at Dover. (A picture of medals and bullet appeared in the *Chronicle* for 1910.) The son told me that his father died in 1869 and that the bullet was then cut out of his thigh having been there for close upon sixty years.

In January 1915 I was fortunate enough to be able to purchase the medals and bullet as well as a second bullet which struck Costello at Waterloo from his son's executors, the son whom I met at Dover having died in 1913. They are now in the collection of the Rifle Brigade Club.

² Costello, pp. 38-39.

³ Simmons, pp. 77-79.

French of their artillery which only came into action for a brief period at the commencement of the fight. It was in fact a light infantry fight pure and simple and the fatigue of the officers and men was excessive. "At about 5 p.m. we broke our fast and never were poor devils more completely knocked up," writes Leach. About mid-day in the midst of the fight a second tremendous rainstorm had come on and continued till nigh six o'clock. This storm is described as even worse than the one of the night before. After dark the force retired about four miles halting at ten p.m. among some rocks near Valverde. Here they made fires and in some measure dried their clothes and got a much needed "night's rest." It is not surprising to hear that "in the morning the general complaint was rheumatism." French prisoners and deserters asserted that the *chasseurs* who had made such a very determined and sustained attack on the Light Division consisted of over a thousand picked marksmen selected from the whole of Masséna's Army. This was because the French were well aware of the good shooting of Craufurd's light troops. Another story, possible though not so probable, was that these marksmen were officered by those who had already won the Legion of Honour!¹

Among both officers and men of the Light Division there was considerable discontent at the way Craufurd had managed the fight and more especially at his having fought at all on the east side of the Coa. Leach in a letter does not miss the chance "You will have heard how universally General Craufurd was hated and detested in the retreat from Coruña. If possible he is still more abhorred now and has been ever since we landed in Portugal. He is a damned tyrant and has proved himself totally unfit to command a Company much less a Division. I understand he has just got into a scrape with Lord Wellington for pitching on ground for his position which the most uninstructed boy of one month's standing would have known

¹ Leach, MS. Letter in *Journal*.

better than to have taken up. If ever we meet I will tell you more about him." It is difficult to imagine what more Leach had to "tell" in Craufurd's disfavour! The fact remains that in all the regimental accounts (and there are many) of this fight the writers blame Craufurd for his handling of all arms during the combat. What alone saved the British force (and Craufurd) on this day was the splendid individual fighting qualities of the officers and men of the Light Division.

Yet another issue involved was the lack of support given to Craufurd by the other Divisional Commanders in the vicinity. So far back as 8 March Wellington wrote to Craufurd "I intend that the Divisions of General Picton and General Cole should support you on the Coa without waiting for orders from me if it should be necessary and they shall be directed accordingly." And on 28 May Wellington sent a memorandum to Picton, Cole and Craufurd, in which Picton was charged "to observe the ford of Porto de Vide, as well as the bridge over the Coa, under Pinhel."¹ On 2 July further instructions to the same commanders were issued in which they were "requested to communicate with each other,"² and two days later on 4 July Picton wrote from Pinhel to Craufurd for information as to the latter's movements so that he might be able "to co-operate with them in obedience with H.E. The Commander of the Forces' instructions."³ I have repeated these instructions since it has been advanced by some that Picton had no orders to assist Craufurd. What happened was that after Craufurd had crossed the bridge Picton rode up alone and Craufurd appealed to him for help. This Picton refused and after an exchange of courtesies the two separated in wrath. This untoward incident has been denied but the evidence of Craufurd's Brigade Major on the matter is conclusive that it unfortunately did occur. It is very certain that Picton could have brought some of his Division to the Coa distant

¹ *Well. Desp.* (Ed. 1838), vi., p 149.

² *Ibid.*, p. 239.

³ *General Craufurd and his Light Division*, p. 121.

only eight miles from Pinhel some hours earlier had he wished to do so. Some writers have affected surprise at Picton's conduct but a little knowledge of the conditions then prevailing in Wellington's Army would remove their perplexity.

The excellence of much of the work of the Light Division was a source of intense jealousy among the other Divisions. Of this there are innumerable proofs. Leach in his *Rough Sketches* states the case plainly when he writes: "Among a certain number of malcontents in the army the very name of the Light Division or the Outposts was sufficient to turn their ration rum into vinegar and to spoil their appetite for that day's allowance of ration beef also. In good truth, General officers were to be found, whom I could name, that bore towards us no very good will, perhaps because it was not their lot to hold so prominent a command as that of our more fortunate and favoured Brigadier." It is not unlikely that Picton's little difference with Craufurd was connected with this matter.¹

For their conduct at the Coa the officers and men of the Light Division obtained high praise from Wellington who in his despatch to Lord Liverpool from Alverca on 25 July 1810 wrote: "I am informed that throughout this trying day the Commanding officers of the 43rd, 52nd and 95th Regiments, Lieutenant-Colonel Beckwith, Lieutenant-Colonel Barclay and Lieutenant-Colonel Hull, and all the officers and soldiers of these excellent Regiments distinguished themselves." He also mentions "the steadiness of the 3rd Regiment of Caçadores." The censure on Craufurd implied by such high commendation of his troops with no mention of the Commander himself was accentuated by Wellington saying in this same despatch "it had been

¹ See also Fortescue, vol. vii, p. 485, Napier, vol. v, p. 418. A futile attempt was made in Robinson's *Life of Picton*, vol. i, p. 289, to deny the story. This is repeated in Rigaud's *Celer et Audax*, p. 125. See also *General Craufurd and his Light Division*, p. 115.

desirable to keep open the communications with Almeida and the right of the Coa as long as possible, but it was not intended to risk an affair or any loss for that object."

Craufurd felt this implied rebuke acutely and it is on record that at this time and for some weeks after he suffered greatly from "despondency." The reason why Wellington refrained from openly censuring Craufurd are stated by himself in a letter he wrote on 31 July to Wellesley Pole in which he says "Although I shall be hanged for them, you may be very certain that not only I have had nothing to do with, but had positively forbidden, the foolish affairs in which Craufurd involved his outposts. Of the first, indeed, in which Talbot was killed, I knew nothing before it happened. In respect to the last, that of the 24th, I had positively desired him not to engage in any affair on the other side of the Coa; . . . You may say, if this be the case, why not accuse Craufurd? I answer, because, if I am to be hanged for it, I cannot accuse a man who I think has meant well, and whose error is one of judgement, and not of intention."¹

Nor did Wellington overlook the fact that had he censured Craufurd's disobedience, he would have been obliged also to call Picton to account with the result that there would inevitably have been a Craufurd party and a Picton party in his army. In consequence he very wisely let the whole matter drop.

¹ *Well. Supp. Desp.* vi, pp. 563-564.



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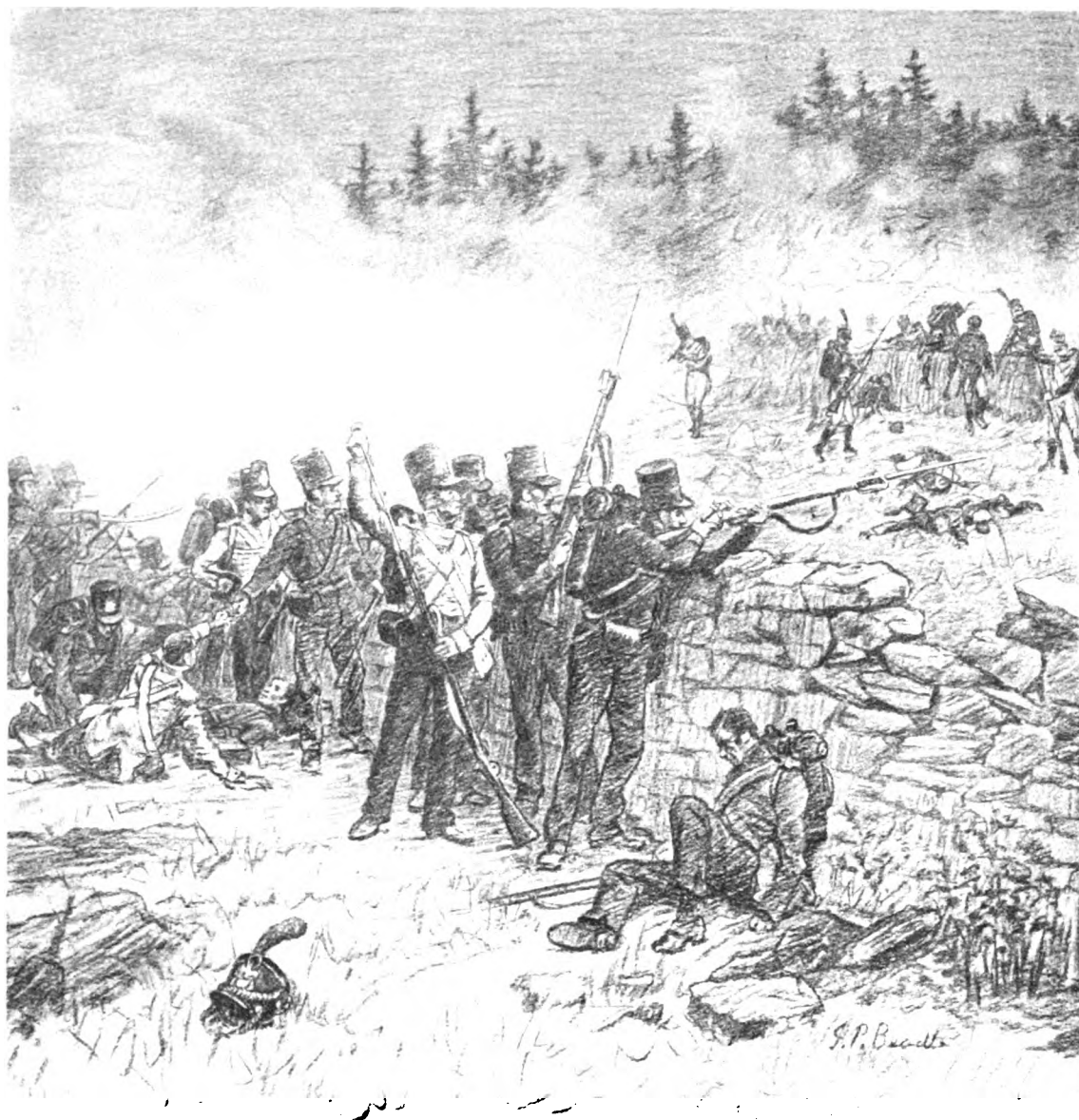
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desirable to keep open the communication with Almeida and the right of the Coa as long as possible, but it was not intended to risk an affair of any sort for that time.

Craufurd left the army in a state of despondency and it is on record that at that time and for some weeks after he suffered greatly from "despondency." The Duke of Wellington refrained from openly censuring Craufurd, but in a letter he wrote on 31 July to Wellington, he is reported to have said: "Although I shall be hanged for this, I do not regret it, for not only I have had nothing to do with the foolish affairs in which Craufurd was engaged, but I have indeed, in which Talbot was killed, I know nothing before it happened. In respect to the last, that of the 4th, I had positively desired him not to engage in any affair on the other side of the Coa; . . . You may say, if this be the case, why not accuse Craufurd? I answer, because, if I am to be hanged for it, I cannot accuse a man who I think has meant well, and whose error is one of judgement, and not of intention."¹

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¹ *Well. Supp. Desp.* vi, pp. 563-564.



**THE COMBAT OF THE COA.
24 JULY 1810.**

**The Last Stand made by the Rifle Corps and the 43rd Light Infantry to Cover the
Retirement across the Bridge.**

(From a sketch by J. P. Beadle.)

CHAPTER VIII.

BATTLE OF BUSSACO, 1810.

The Light Division formed into two Brigades—Masséna advances—Almeida invested—Explosion of grand magazine—Surrender of fortress—Wellington retires on Celorico—Masséna's feints—Wellington retires on Bussaco—The Light Division covers the retirement—Craufurd again waits too long—Masséna's army concentrates in front of Bussaco—The position at Bussaco—Wellington's general dispositions—The Battle—Reynier's attacks on British right—Craufurd's position on British left—Ney attacks—Advance of Loison's Division up the heights—Overwhelming counter-attack by Craufurd—Marchand's Division repulsed—Letter from Jonathan Leach describing battle—Losses of the French in the attacks—Oman's and Chambers' accounts of details of fight—Losses of the French—Losses of the Anglo-Portuguese—Masséna's and Wellington's estimates at the time.

AT midnight on 25 July the Light Division marched in torrents of rain to Freixeda arriving at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Here they met Wellington who had come up from Alverca on hearing of the Coa fight. At his wish they were ordered into the houses, where they remained until the 28th. On this day they marched at 4 a.m. and reached Celorico at 11 a.m., here they huddled themselves with branches of trees.

On 4 August the Light Division was divided into two brigades; the 1st Brigade under Sidney Beckwith, consisting of the 43rd, four Companies (the right wing) of the 1st Battalion of the 95th Rifles and the 3rd Caçadores, the 2nd Brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Barclay of the 52nd being formed of the 52nd, four Companies (the left wing) of the 1st Battalion of the 95th Rifles and the 1st Caçadores.

The following day the Light Division having had just over a week's breathing time were ordered to advance again to the villages

See Map
"Lisbon to
Valladolid"
at end of
volume

of Freixeda and Vendada to support the cavalry which was observing the line of the Coa. For the next two weeks they were constantly on the move from bivouac to bivouac. For three days (between 26-28 August) there were heavy thunderstorms and continuous rain against which the shelters of fir branches gave no protection. Meanwhile Ney's siege train had arrived on the 15th and he at once invested Almeida. High hopes were held as to its powers of resistance owing to its rocky site which made it difficult to attack by ordinary trench-work approaches. At this time Reynier with the IInd Corps was on the frontier near Zarza la Mayor "keeping Hill busy" in accordance with his instructions, Hill being near Sarnadas about three marches south of Celorico observing the valley of the Tagus. Wellington meanwhile was having an anxious time; he had reports of Séras advancing from the north into Portugal and of Mortier moving south of the Tagus on Lisbon. All these things coupled with Masséna's undoubted strength in his front made it necessary for him to keep a very sharp eye on his line of operations through Coimbra in the valley of the Mondego. At Ponte da Murcella on the river Alva about thirteen miles in advance of Coimbra he had prepared an entrenched position to cover his retreat if necessary. To add to his worries there was about this time a considerable shortage of troops, whilst apart from his numerous military anxieties, trouble was brewing in Lisbon with the incapable Regency who interfered with his arrangements for the Portuguese levies. Things however gradually became clearer when Masséna declared his hand by setting about the siege of Almeida. Wellington thereupon advanced again to Alverca with Craufurd and Picton in front. By this means he obliged Masséna to keep his force concentrated and increased his difficulties in feeding his men. At this time there was a constant stream of deserters from the French army, on one day alone no less than thirty-five coming in to our outposts.¹

¹ Leach MS. *Journal*.

The French batteries were completed and opened on Almeida early on 26 August and at seven o'clock the same evening by an unlucky shell, the grand magazine was blown up, some 500 people were killed including half of the artillerymen, most of the guns were dismounted, although the actual ramparts were undamaged. The worst of all was that no ammunition remained and the place was practically defenceless. The following day Masséna summoned the place and Colonel Cox, the Commandant, strove to gain time but was compelled to surrender by his Portuguese officers. It was a severe blow to Wellington who thus at one swoop lost a fortress which he had hoped would postpone Masséna's advance for some weeks at least. Also he was deprived of a store of bread which he had collected with much labour and of which he wrote to Hill that its possession would enable Masséna to invade Portugal.

Wellington now expected Masséna to advance immediately and so withdrew his headquarters to Celorico. On the morning of the 28th the advancing French dragoons had some skirmishing with our cavalry which fell back to Freixeda towards evening, the Light Division retiring to Baracal and Minhoeal, villages east of Celorico. On this and the following day our cavalry captured twenty-five dragoons and eleven infantrymen, some of the latter belonging to the 32nd *Léger*, known as the "Invincibles."¹ The enemy's cavalry however did not press on and the Light Division remained in observation near Celorico for some days longer. Reynier's Corps was threatening an advance by Sabugal and Wellington fell back once again to the line Guarda—Celorico on a front of about fifteen miles between the upper waters of the Coa and the Mondego. All the cavalry, six regiments under Sir Stapleton Cotton, covered his front, with the Light Division in support. On 2 September 1,200 of the French cavalry with a brigade of infantry attacked the

¹ John Cox MS. *Journal* and Leach MS., also *Rough Sketches*, p. 155.

British outposts at Freixeda and Wellington ordered his main force to fall back on Pinhancos and Moita leaving only cavalry in front of Celorico and Guarda. At 3 a.m. on 3 September the Light Division fell back from Celorico, about fourteen miles, to Sampayo arriving there at nightfall and bivouacking in the fir woods. Then followed some days of watching and waiting whilst Masséna's plans took shape.

The fact was Masséna in spite of the great numbers nominally at his disposal found himself already in difficulties. The operations he had been engaged in, the sieges of Rodrigo and Almeida, combined with sickness due to the weather had greatly reduced his forces. He further lacked supplies and was short of ammunition and, above all, was disagreeably surprised to find as he advanced that Wellington's order to the inhabitants to destroy and carry off all supplies had been carried out with unexpected thoroughness. In order to make good his deficiencies in men he now ordered Reynier's Corps to join him, thus bringing up his total available fighting force to over 62,000.

On 9 September some of Masséna's cavalry entered Alfayates and pushed on to Sabugal, the 16th Light Dragoons under Somers Cocks retiring before them. Meanwhile Wellington gradually withdrew and on this day the Light Division marched to and occupied Mangualde, Moimenta and adjacent villages at the foot of the Serra da Estrella. Leach notes "This is the first time for three months that I have slept in a bed or with my clothes off."

On 15 September Masséna began his advance and two days later the VIth Corps (Ney) and the IIInd (Reynier) were at Guarda and Celorico with the VIIIth (Junot) at Pinhel. From Celorico two roads lead to Coimbra on either bank of the Mondego, the northern (and the worst) by Viseu and Bussaco, the southern by Sampayo and Ponte da Murcella; this last is the main road and paved but was at the time in very bad order. Masséna probably avoided this road since he was aware that Wellington had prepared the entrenched position along it at Ponte da Murcella behind the Alva River.

Masséna's moves on the 17th disclosed the direction of his advance for Ney crossed the Mondego at Fornos and Junot marched on Trancoso whilst Reynier entered Celorico. Wellington left some cavalry at Gouvea to watch the main road and also Reynier who had halted at the parting of the two routes, posting the Light Division at Cea (where were his own headquarters) in support. The 1st (Spencer's), 3rd (Picton's) and 4th (Cole's) Divisions retired towards Ponte da Murcella whilst the 5th (Leith's) and 2nd (Hill's) which had been watching the roads by Castello Branco and Abrantes south of the Serra da Estrella were ordered on Espinhal, twenty miles south of Ponte da Murcella. Trant's Portuguese at Moimenta da Beira on the extreme left flank were now ordered to close in towards Sardão.

On 18 September Ney reached Vizeu only to find it deserted; on this day some of Reynier's troops feinted towards Sampayo hoping to deceive Wellington. Next day Somers Cocks reported that Masséna had left his communications (Celorico—Ciudad Rodrigo) and taking everything with him was moving on Vizeu.

On 20 September Craufurd, who had retired from Cea to Cortiça where were Wellington's headquarters, crossed the Mondego and occupied Mortagoa to support Pack's Portuguese brigade; Spencer with the 1st Division and two Portuguese brigades were near Mealhada and Cole was at Penacova west of the Mondego whilst the Cavalry Division and Picton remained at Ponte da Murcella to keep in touch with Leith and Hill. Wellington had now disposed his forces so as to block Masséna's advance by any of the roads he might select.

Ney's advance-guard was in Santa Comba Dão on the 21st and Reynier who marched through Vizeu was behind him; the French artillery and supplies were however still far in rear. On 22 September Reynier's Corps took the lead and crossed the Criz river in the afternoon, the British outposts falling back to Mortagoa; Ney remained halted and Junot was still at Vizeu. By the evening of this day

Wellington had practically occupied the high ridge at Bussaco with Leith's, Picton's and Cole's Divisions, with the Light Division as advance-guard in front of them at Mortagoa. Spencer was at Mealhada on the extreme left and Hill was on the extreme right opposite Penacova. At 11 a.m. on the 23rd two regiments of cavalry supported by one or two battalions of Reynier's infantry drove in our cavalry outposts and in the afternoon Wellington ordered the Light Division to retire. Three of our cavalry regiments covered this retirement. The whole of our cavalry were then ordered to withdraw to the Serra leaving three squadrons from the 14th and 16th Light Dragoons and the 1st Hussars K.G.L. with the Light Division. At nightfall the Light Division was strongly posted in the foothills west of Mortagoa.

On the 24th soon after daybreak the Light Division marched to a wood hard by, where they made huts. But at 3 o'clock in the afternoon a force of cavalry and infantry advanced towards the heights. There was some sharp skirmishing with our cavalry squadrons, ending with "a gallant charge on the French dragoons which made them retreat precipitately with the loss of three men killed and many wounded and prisoners."¹ O'Hare's and Leach's companies of the Rifles found the piquets this night on the hills to the right of the Division.

At 9 a.m. on the 25th the French again advanced pushing on their cavalry and the Light Division fell back towards the Serra do Bussaco. The enemy however came on quickly and their light infantry in extended order pressed forward through the intervals of their cavalry. The rear company of the Rifle Corps was obliged to turn about and commence a fire which effectually checked them. So writes Leach in his journal and for once does not blame Craufurd nor does he, apparently, attach much importance to the affair. But

¹ Leach MS. *Journal*.

others do and it is clear that here, once again, Craufurd gave an example of his invincible objection to withdrawing before an enemy although he had most of Reynier's corps in front of him. Kincaid describes how the Light Division had remained too long in an advanced position whilst the enemy's masses were gathering around them and how Lord Wellington fortunately came up before they were too far committed and ordered an immediate retreat.¹

The Light Division eventually gained the shelter of the enclosures and broken ground about Sula and Moura, two small villages about half a mile apart; here they made a stand.

See
Map XVI
page 142.

The French now brought up some heavy guns and threw both shot and shell into Sula which was held by Beckwith's Brigade with two of Ross's guns, whilst a sharp infantry attack was made on Barclay's Brigade which occupied Moura. The French were, however, driven back with some loss. It was now about 5 o'clock; an hour later the Light Division was withdrawn to the heights of Bussaco where they bivouacked. The outposts below kept up a desultory interchange of fire which ceased at nightfall. Towards evening, Ney's Corps arrived and Loison's Division, which formed his vanguard, bivouacked east of Sula in front of the Light Division. Reynier's Corps moved southward and bivouacked on the low spurs almost parallel to and in front of the Serra

¹ *Random Shots*, p. 83. I possess a copy of this book freely annotated in ink by some former owner who unquestionably belonged to the Light Division and most probably to the Rifles and who was obviously present at the Coa, Bussaco and other fights. The preceding passage is marked "A 2nd Edition of Craufurd's obstinate immovability as at the Coa Folly." Kincaid also quotes Napier's words and endorses them "the enemy with incredible rapidity brought up both infantry and guns and fell on so briskly that all the skill of the general and the readiness of the excellent troops composing the rear-guard only prevented the Division from being dangerously engaged." Fortescue (vol. vii, p. 506) seems to infer that Craufurd made an incautious advance, "he led the Light Division down into a plain," but it is clear from Kincaid's account as well as from Leach's Journal that it was during his *retirement* across the open country between Mortagoa and Moura that he got into difficulties.

with its line of piquets extended along the foot of it. Then came the valley with our piquets in the hither side. Eye-witnesses speak of the fine sight presented on that night by the innumerable watch fires of the French army assembled below, of which they had a bird's eye view. It was a cold night on the heights as may be imagined.

Long before daylight the famous brass drums of the French Army beat to arms and both Armies fell in at their appointed stations. The village of Sula had been held throughout the night by four Companies of the Rifles and soon after dawn the French Artillery opened on it again but were unable to dislodge our men. Some dense masses of skirmishers advanced and our piquets were actively engaged all along the line but managed to hold their own. During the day Masséna closed up his whole Army in front and a most impressive sight it must have been, for it is seldom that ground lends itself to such a spectacular view as the heights of Bussaco. For twelve hours the hillsides and wooded ravines rang with musketry and rifle fire but once again at nightfall it died away and there came an interval of peace and quietness, although not for long. During this day Junot's Corps arrived and was halted about a mile east of Moura.

The Serra do Bussaco is a very commanding ridge some 1,800 feet above the sea and since the Mondego flows below its southern spurs and enters the sea less than forty miles to the west its height is all the more apparent. The top of the ridge is a heathy expanse strewn with rocks and stones, the spurs and ravines on its sides are numerous and very steep. At its north end lies the convent of Bussaco in a wood surrounded by a wall. The rest of the ground is open and overgrown with heather and gorse, amid which many huge boulders and masses of rock are scattered. Three roads on Coimbra cross the ridge, the northern or main one from Vizeu to Mealhada and two minor roads, one on Palheiros, three miles south of the first and another, two miles beyond, by San Paulo and Palmases.

The position taken up by Wellington on this most commanding ridge faced eastward and extended from the bluff overlooking the Mondego valley on its right to the spurs north of the convent of Bussaco, a distance of over nine miles. Hill was on his extreme right with Cole on the left, the other British Divisions, interspersed with Portuguese Brigades, being distributed at selected points along its front. The extraordinary command of the position and the steepness of the hillsides can be easily realized from an inspection of the map. Thus the valley in which runs the stream south of Moura, only half a mile in front, is over 1,000 feet below the ridge above, the slope at places near the summit being as steep as 1 in 2 or over 25 degrees.

On the 26th Masséna reconnoitred Wellington's position and decided to attack what he took to be the British right with Reynier's Corps, 15,000 infantry and to endeavour to turn it, whilst Ney's Corps, 22,000 infantry, was to advance and attack by the main Coimbra road through Sula, Junot with 16,000 infantry to be in reserve at Moura. It is not hard to see that when he framed this order he imagined Wellington's right rested on the Palheiros road (the centre of the three already described) also that he had misinterpreted Cole's movement northward to take up his assigned position as indicating Wellington's intention to withdraw to Mealhada. As a matter of fact Wellington's right, so far from being on the Palheiros road was as we have seen some five miles south of it. Here he had posted Hill and some Portuguese. Midway between Hill and Picton, across the San Paulo road was Leith's Division with more Portuguese, Picton with Spencer on his left were in the centre and two miles north of them was Craufurd, with Cole yet another mile on his left. The whole front thus covered, over nine miles, was of course far too extended for Wellington's force of some 40,000 infantry to hold everywhere but he had reckoned on his power to move his troops unseen behind the ridge to reinforce any point attacked. To facilitate this he had caused a good lateral communication to be made along the rear of the position.

History of the Rifle Brigade

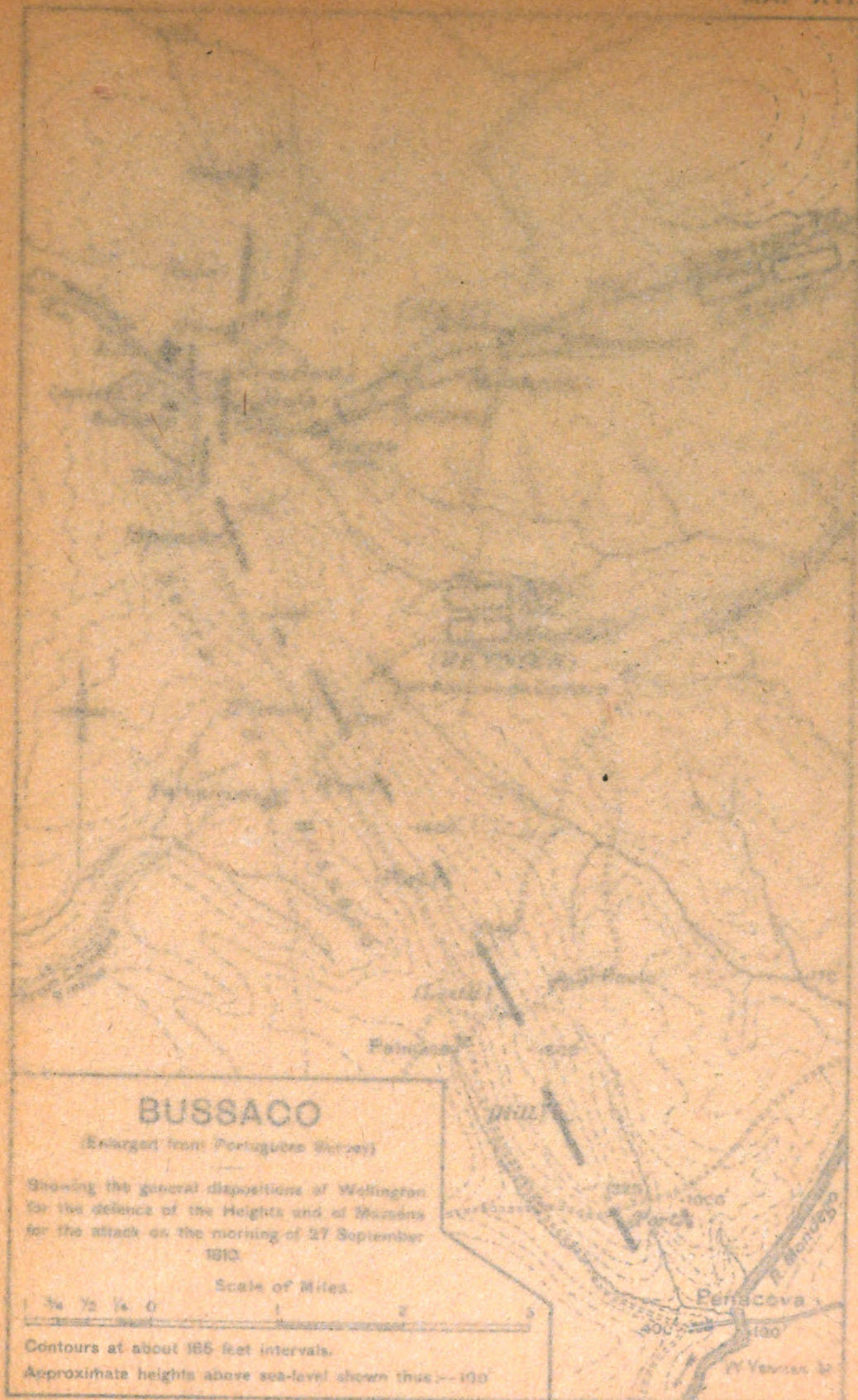
Before describing the share of the Light Division in general and of the 95th Rifles in particular in the defeat of the French on this day, I will briefly outline the main events in other parts of the field.

The battle commenced soon after dawn on the 27th by Reynier launching his two Divisions against Picton. Each Division was formed in a column in mass of Regiments, each Regiment of three or four Battalions being formed in column of companies; a front of fifty men. At 5.30 Merle's Division covered by skirmishers advanced and when near the summit they were met by the fire of our light troops and guns and inclined to their right. There was some desperate fighting but it ended in every case in the French, who were breathless and disordered by their efforts to climb the steep and broken hillside, being overwhelmed and driven down hill. Arnaud's Brigade of Heudelet's Division which advanced by the Palheiros road fared no better. A second attack was overwhelmed by a splendid charge delivered by some companies of the 45th and the 88th. Later on, Foy's Brigade made a third attempt and although the fire from our light troops was terribly severe, he actually gained the summit in rear of Picton. At this moment Leith came up and his leading Regiment, the 9th, charged furiously, and the French were driven downhill in headlong confusion.

With Foy's defeat Reynier abandoned the attack, he had lost over 2,000 killed wounded and prisoners. To renew the attack was out of the question for Hill's Division had meanwhile arrived and the British were in stronger force than ever on the hilltop.

See
Map XVII,
page 156.

The Light Division was posted with its centre about 200 yards in advance of the north-east angle of the Convent enclosure and extended northward along the crest. On its right was Pack's Portuguese Brigade which occupied the interval between it and Spencer's Division. On its left and somewhat lower down was Campbell's Portuguese Brigade. Craufurd drew up the 43rd on the right with the 52nd



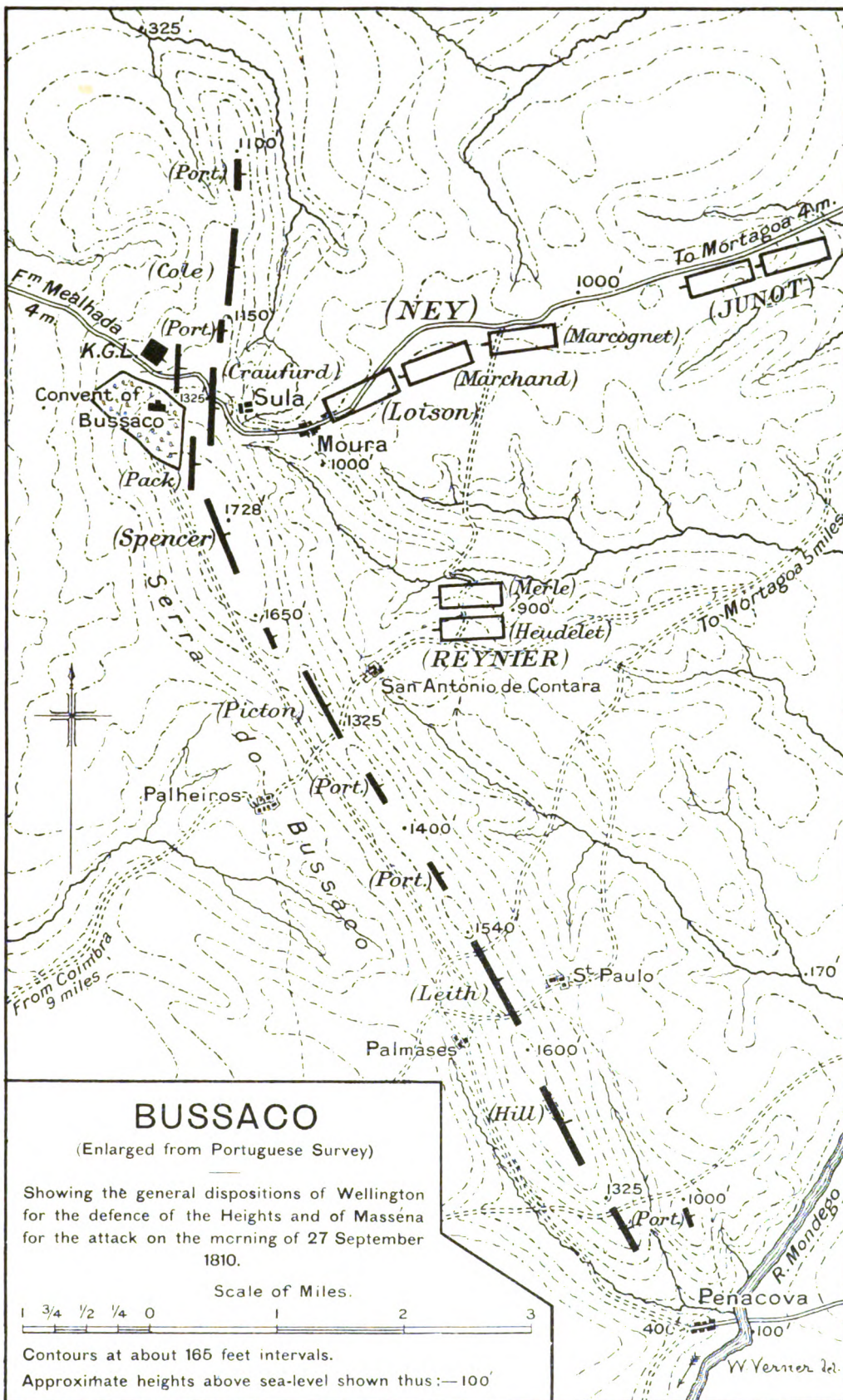
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The battle commenced soon after dawn on the 27th by Reynier launching his two Divisions against Picton. Each Division was formed in a column in mass of Regiments, each Regiment of three or four Battalions being formed in column of companies; a front of fifty men. At 5.30 Merle's Division covered by skirmishers advanced and when near the summit they were met by the fire of our light troops and guns and inclined to their right. There was some desperate fighting but it ended in every case in the French, who were breathless and disordered by their efforts to climb the steep and broken hillside, being overwhelmed and driven down hill. Arnaud's Brigade of Heudelet's Division which advanced by the Palheiros road fared no better. A second attack was overwhelmed by a splendid charge delivered by some companies of the 45th and the 88th. Later on, Foy's Brigade made a third attempt and although the fire from our light troops was terribly severe, he actually gained the summit in rear of Picton. At this moment Leith came up and his leading Regiment, the 9th, charged furiously, and the French were driven downhill in headlong confusion.

With Foy's defeat Reynier abandoned the attack, he had lost over 2,000 killed wounded and prisoners. To renew the attack was out of the question for Hill's Division had meanwhile arrived and the British were in stronger force than ever on the hilltop.

The Light Division was posted with its centre about 200 yards in advance of the north-east angle of the Convent enclosure and extended northward along the crest. On its right was Pack's Portuguese Brigade which occupied the interval between it and Spencer's Division. On its left and somewhat lower down was Campbell's Portuguese Brigade. Craufurd drew up the 43rd on the right with the 52nd

See
Map XVII.
page 136



BUSSACO—RAL MAP

on the left and the 1st Caçadores in second line in reserve and the men lay down some few yards behind the crest and were of course out of sight of the country below.

On the right of the Light Division Wellington had posted a battery of the King's German Legion and two of Portuguese artillery which commanded the road from Moura. A short distance in front of the interval between the 43rd and 52nd were three of Ross's guns at a salient on the edge of the crest where some detached rocks served as natural embrasures, the other half-battery being a short distance to the right of them. On the left of the 52nd were Bull's Horse Artillery guns which effectually commanded the road leading out of Sula. About a quarter of a mile in rear of the Light Division stood the infantry or the K.G.L. and also Coleman's Portuguese Brigade on somewhat lower ground and visible it is said from the French side.

Ney, in accordance with Masséna's orders, as soon as he saw the leading column of Merle's Division approaching the summit of the Serra, ordered an advance. It was now about 7 a.m. Soon two heavy columns were seen advancing, one (Loison's Division) directly towards the Light Division, the second (Marchand's Division) apparently aiming at a point on its right as if to outflank it, whilst a third (Mermet's Division) moved into second line as a reserve. The two advancing columns, when first seen were marching in close column of sections. They entered the woods below and threw forward a great mass of skirmishers to cover their front. A deep ravine led up to the position held by the Light Division and Loison's Division advanced along the northern side of this towards Sula, whilst Marchand's moved along the road from Moura and then, inclining to its left, advanced along its southern side, the attack thus becoming practically two separate assaults.

Loison's Division at the start consisted of Simon's Brigade of six Battalions in front followed by Férey's Brigade of an equal number.

Férey it may be recalled was the officer concerned in the night attack at Barba del Puerco six months earlier.

Craufurd had covered his front with a very strong line of skirmishers consisting of the Rifles, 750 strong, the 3rd Caçadores, 650 strong, and about sixty sharpshooters of the K.G.L. which held the enclosures in front of Sula and, as soon as the French attack developed, opened a biting fire on it. Before the British light troops would relinquish their hold of Sula, Loison had to bring up several battalions to reinforce his skirmishing line, and upon the French reaching the hither side of the village the British guns opened on them from several points in front, Bull's from their right front, Ross's in front and the battery of the K.G.L. from their left front. Craufurd now reinforced his skirmishers with the 1st Caçadores, about 550 strong, and the fight became furious. Our Riflemen were amid heather and rocks and contested every point. But Loison's Division still moving in one huge column of sections¹ pressed on, and slowly but surely began to ascend the steep slope immediately below the crest. Sometime during the advance Férey's Brigade came up on the left of Simon's and the two moved on in line of brigades in mass. Whether subsequently there was any further deployment into a line of regimental columns or into columns of double-companies, it is hard to say.

Craufurd had taken up his position on a commanding rock

¹ Leach in his MS. *Journal* says "They marched up the heights in column of sections and were about to form line when they met this kind reception." Oman (vol. iii, p. 380) says they moved up the hill "in one dense and deep column on a front of a company only," but his map shows them attacking in a line of five columns on a front of some 550 yards. Fortescue (vol. vii, p. 524 and note) suggests that each Brigade advanced with a front of a double-company. After carefully studying many accounts, I have come to the conclusion that at the moment of impact the two Brigades were most probably formed, each in mass in columns of double-companies, giving a front of about 120 yards, and as such I have shown them in the accompanying plan of the battle. It is difficult to say how many of the battalions were thrown forward into the skirmishing line, so I have shown them in their original stations in column.

somewhat in advance of the crest-line whence he could watch every movement of the enemy below and at the same time could control the movement of his Division. The crag is at the end of an outcrop of rock forming a sort of natural escarpment eight to ten feet high or so running northward for some fifty yards. He had arranged to give a signal to his Regiments when he wished them to rise and attack the foe. Our Riflemen and the Caçadores could not hold back the dense advancing mass of *tirailleurs* and gradually retired up the hill, the bulk of them it is said forming up behind the 43rd since the ground on the flank of the 52nd was at places almost impracticable.

William Napier, an eye-witness with the 43rd, has described as could no one else, how at this critical time "the enemy's shot came singing up in a sharper key and the skirmishers, breathless and begrimed with powder, rushed over the edge of the ascent, when the artillery drew back and the victorious cries of the French were heard within a few yards of the summit."

Then came what may fitly be called the supreme moment of Craufurd's life. He had remained on the rock and when "the head of the enemy's column was within a very few yards of him he turned round, came up to the 52nd and called out 'Now 52nd revenge the death of Sir John Moore! Charge, charge, Huzza!' and waving his hat in the air he was answered by a shout which appalled the enemy!"¹ The British bugles sounded, the men of the Light Division sprang to their feet and the four central companies of the two Regiments dashed forward with the bayonet. Of these the right flank company of the 52nd under George Napier, finding itself exactly in front of the first section of the French column which had gained the summit, formed "column of sections in order to give more force to the rush." The French stood firm and fired one volley into the leading section of the 52nd company and two British officers and nine men fell.

¹ Napier: *Early Military Life of General Sir George T. Napier*, p. 124.

Now it was that the three companies on the outer flanks of both the 43rd and 52nd wheeled inwards and poured three terrible volleys into the flanks of the disordered mass of Frenchmen recoiling before the bayonet charge. Never was there a more complete rout. Owing to the steepness of the ground and its rough and rocky nature scores of the French who escaped bullet and steel were overthrown and hurled down the hillside. "Men, muskets, knapsacks and bayonets rolled down in one confused mass." So hardly were the fugitives pressed by the four central companies of the 43rd and 52nd with the bayonet that it was impossible for those on either flank to fire without risk to their comrades.

Meanwhile our Horse Artillery kept up a terrible fire of grape-shot on those in the rear of the French column which were struggling through the narrow streets of Sula. Leach describes how the instant the attacking columns turned back they were at the mercy of the pursuers and how "so large a column wedged close in a road of no great width" was practically helpless. Also how the 95th Rifles and Caçadores pushed along the flanks and dealt out destruction.

The 43rd and the 52nd followed the flying French down the steep slope, firing at them and bayoneting them. It is stated that it took them less than five minutes to reach the foot of the hill, whereas it took more than half an hour for them to return to their position at the crest line! The Rifles and Caçadores were actively engaged in pursuit and were later on employed in keeping down the fire of the swarms of hostile skirmishers which still infested the valley.

About 2 p.m., according to William Napier, "towards evening," according to Leach, the firing died down and there was a temporary truce and the men of both armies met at the brook below seeking after their wounded. It is not easy to reconcile the various accounts of this episode, George Napier asserting that they reached the stream "in less than twenty minutes and by general consent we all mingled together

searching for the wounded.” On the other hand, Leach specifically states that a flag of truce was sent in and that “the time agreed for the suspension of hostilities having expired and the French evincing a disposition to hold the village of Sula with a few men, Lord Wellington who was with our Division at the moment, ordered a Company of the 95th to drive them from it which was speedily accomplished and we established strong piquets for the night.”¹ William Napier says that before the village of Sula was thus cleared, Craufurd had turned twelve guns on it and subsequently sent a company of the 43rd to turn the enemy out. There is nothing in this that cannot be reconciled with Leach’s account since the Rifles were as usual covering the front and keeping back the enemy’s skirmishers and without doubt would have taken part in any advance on Sula.

During Loison’s advance to the attack a battalion on the left flank of his left Brigade lost touch and upon gaining the summit at the head of the ravine was charged and driven down the hill by Coleman’s² Portuguese. This battalion was apparently the 32nd *Léger*.

Turning now to Ney’s other Division (Marchand’s) which attacked on the left of the ravine ; Maucune’s Brigade, consisting of the 6th *Léger* (two battalions) and the three battalions of the 69th, on the right, followed by Marcognet’s Brigade of six battalions, altogether about 6,500 strong, came under heavy artillery fire from the three batteries on the right of the Light Division and later suffered from the Portuguese skirmishers ; they however gained the heights only to be eventually driven down the hill by Pack’s Portuguese battalions.

Ney now ordered Marchand to retire ; Loison had been driven back and Reynier’s attack, had as we have seen, failed.

The following letter by Leach has not hitherto been published. There are necessarily some repetitions in it of what has already been

¹ Leach, *Rough Sketches*, p. 168.

² Coleman’s Portuguese Brigade had been moved during the battle from the left rear to the right flank of the Light Division. This is shown on the plan.

told but it is written so freshly and vigorously and so accurately describes the salient features of that eventful day that I give it here

. . . . “As for the fight at Busaco you will make it out from the official despatches better than from my account. If ever we meet (which I trust we soon shall) I will endeavour to explain the whole business. You will naturally wonder to see by the returns that our regiment lost no officers. I will account for it in two ways. In the first place we lost so many officers at the Coa which have not yet joined in consequence of their wounds (and three of whom are since dead) that we had a great scarcity, scarcely enough to do the duty. In the second place the hills occupied by the Light Division were extremely high and the approach to them near the summit full of craggy rocks. Amongst these and some fir trees our Companies lay scattered and had such excellent cover that I am puzzled to conceive how we contrived to lose forty-one men. Not an officer was hit. The 43rd and 52nd were formed on the summit of the heights and by most excellent management of Lord Wellington were kept rather behind the brow of the hill so that the French in their advance to the attack could see nothing but our green jackets peeping out from among the rough and broken ground and making every shot tell amongst them without their being able to do us any material injury. All the prisoners who were taken agreed in the report that even the General who led on the attack did not conceive that the hill was defended by anything more than a few skirmishers and they were therefore not agreeably surprised on their reaching the summit to be saluted with a volley and charge of bayonets from the 43rd and 52nd who were formed in line and ready to receive them. In an instant the irresistible three cheers and the cold steel sent the whole column to the right about and you may then fancy the confusion and destruction amongst them. Our Artillery and Riflemen and two Light

Battalions firing into a whole Division racing down almost a precipice. You could see them tumbling headlong over each other even those who were not hit. I will not attempt to say how many were destroyed by our Division alone but from a remark which I shall just now make you can give a rough guess. The Division which attacked us was Loison's. General Simon commanded one Brigade of it and General Ferrez [Férey] the other. Simon was wounded and made prisoner whilst leading on his men in a most undaunted manner. Ferrez is said to be wounded. We must give the French their due and say that no men could come up in a more resolute manner. When the almost insurmountable nature of the ground is considered I only wonder that Masséna should have thought it possible to force British troops out of such a position. A flag of truce came in to us towards evening for the purpose of burying their dead or rather of carrying off their wounded. During this cessation we went down amongst them for the sake of curiosity and as you may imagine it was a sad carnage. By Heaven ! one little village was full of killed and wounded. The attacking Division was composed of the following French regiments, as I was enabled to ascertain from their buttons. The 6th, 26th, 66th, 82nd, a Battalion of their Hanoverian Legion and the *Légion du Midi*. Those regiments had nearly reached the summit of the hill when they were attacked. On the day after the battle we got the return of the 26th regiment which was 700 killed and wounded. A deserter from the Hanoverian Legion told me in English 'My Company come up the hill one hundred and he come back twenty-two men only,' from those remarks you may suppose their loss in this attack was immense. The French 82nd and *Légion du Midi* are old Vimiera friends. The 26th, 66th, and 82nd are *Bridge of Lodi boys*, but of the Heights of Busaco I daresay they will be less proud. Our Regiment lost more men than the 43rd and 52nd together and were in short engaged with the French light troops constantly, more or less for three days, and were

much harassed. Our position being very extensive I could not see what was going on when General Picton was attacked who was some miles on our right. General Pack's Portuguese brigade formed line and charged in a most regular and spirited manner under a cannonade of round-shot from the enemy's batteries. It shows what improvement they have made since British officers and good discipline have been introduced amongst them. I was quite hoarse with cheering and halloing. Whenever we saw the Portuguese about to charge, who were nearly a mile distant, we all set up a howl which undoubtedly spirited them on and they behaved uncommonly well, much better than the most sanguine could have expected. The 88th and 45th I am told made a delightful charge, they met our old Vimiera friends, the 32nd and 70th, which are two of their choice regiments. Indeed it is ascertained that Massena's best troops made the attack on that day."

It is interesting to remark that almost every detail in this letter is absolutely borne out by the researches made by Oman and others a century later. For among the archives in Paris every corps whose buttons Leach collected is recorded as having formed part of Loison's advance with the one exception of the 6th. The two battalions of the 6th *Léger* were in Maucune's Brigade of Marchand's Division which were attacked by Pack's Portuguese and lost 365 officers and men out of a total strength of 1,011. The other regiment in Maucune's Brigade was the 69th *Ligne* (three battalions) whose presence Leach does not mention, probably because their advance was made somewhat to the south of the scene of Simon's overthrow. Captain Marcel of the 69th *Ligne* who was present has left a most graphic account of the battle as seen from the side of the attackers. He describes the high spirits with which his men advanced and how, as they filed past Masséna near Moura, the Marshal called out to them not to use their cartridges but to trust to the bayonet. During the advance they suffered much from the fire of our skirmishers on their left flank and

on reaching the foot of the slope came under a heavy musketry fire (probably from the Portuguese Regiments). Marcel says that at this moment his *voltigeurs* shouted out to the British troops above them "*Hé! les Goddém, attendez-nous un instant pour le déjeuner à la fourchette!*"¹ (According to Marcel the British soldiers were generally known to the French by this elegant pseudonym.) The 69th lost 480 killed and wounded out of 1,717. Marcel attributes the failure of the attack to the lack of support they received. Certain it is that whilst Marchand's losses were 1,173 and Loison's 1,252, their supporting Division, Mermet's, only lost three killed and twenty-one wounded. Junot's Corps, which was in reserve, was brought up to cover Ney's retreat and only lost some sixty men from our artillery fire.

These are the figures obtained by Oman in his exhaustive researches. It would be most interesting if the original casualty return of the 26th Regiment referred to by Leach could be discovered, for his '700' dwindles to 393 in the official archives. The impression of those who saw the crushing defeat of Loison's attack was that the battalion at the head of the column was almost annihilated. All accounts agree that Simon led the attack and one French writer, Colonel Delagrave, says "Simon at the head of the 26th Line had captured three pieces of cannon." These would no doubt be Ross's half-battery posted at the point where the column reached the crest line. From this and other accounts it has been generally accepted that the three battalions of the 26th *Ligne* formed the head of Simon's column, but did they? Masséna's Chief of the Staff, Fririon, states that Simon was wounded and made prisoner when about to capture a battery at the head of his *tirailleurs*. Fortescue and Oman both place the 26th in front, but a close study of the strengths of the regiments composing Simon's Brigade and the casualties admitted by the French makes one doubt whether all three battalions of the 26th could have formed the front of the column

¹ *Campagnes du Capitaine Marcel*, pp. 115-118. L. Var. Published in 1912.

at the moment of impact. Koch in his *Life of Masséna* p. 197 states that the *Légion du Midi*, the 26th *Ligne* and the *Légion Hanovrienne* resisted the shock, thus naming the *Légion du Midi* first. The casualties were 55 per cent. in the *Légion du Midi* and only 17·4 per cent. and 18·7 per cent. in the other two. All who have studied the Battle of Bussaco have been at a loss to account for the remarkable discrepancy between the British account of the overwhelming defeat of Simon's Brigade and the comparatively small losses of his leading regiment of three battalions. The reasonable explanation is that the 26th, although it was originally the leading regiment, may have gradually been extended and have joined the heavy skirmishing line which Simon led on so gallantly. This would leave the next Regiment, the *Légion du Midi*, to advance in close column to the summit and thus draw upon itself the full force of Craufurd's counter-attack as well as the concentrated fire of the British artillery.¹

¹ It must be remembered that Craufurd's line of skirmishers was close upon 2,000 strong. Had all three battalions of the 26th *Ligne* and the 32nd *Léger* been extended to cover Loison's front the French skirmishers would only have mustered about 1,950. My own suggestion is that at the outset a battalion of the 26th *Ligne* covered Simon's front and that this line was reinforced during the attack on Sula by a second and possibly by the third battalion of that regiment whilst the 32nd *Léger* prolonged the line of skirmishers to the left. Simon led the 26th up the hill, but by the time he reached the crest, apparently the bulk of the regiment had been extended as skirmishers. Chambers in his *Bussaco*, p. 115, has gone into this matter fully and I am indebted to him for several important references. The exact formation in which Loison's Division advanced has ever been a subject of contention. The roughness of the ground and steepness of the ascent would seem sufficient to have compelled the formed bodies in rear of the *tirailleurs* to move, at any rate for a time, on narrow fronts such as columns of sections. It has often occurred to me that the luckless column of sections whose overthrow is so gloriously described by Napier may have been a body of men roughly formed and striving at all costs to obtain a footing on the summit as a *point d'appui* for their comrades to form and deploy upon. It is significant that all accounts say that the head of the column which was overthrown was largely composed of French officers.

Of late years Oman (1908) has endeavoured to clear up the point and later (1910) Chambers has gone exhaustively into the whole story of the battle. He however criticizes vigorously Oman. It is not my intention to interfere in what may be

There were several items of some interest in this fight ; Loison's Division as we have seen included the Légion Hanovrienne which lost heavily from Craufurd's counter-attack. When the Light Division left the crest of the hill, its place was taken by the infantry of the King's German Legion also largely composed of Hanoverians who acted in support of it. This employment of foreigners, alike by Napoleon and ourselves in a minor degree, no doubt led to many tragic episodes during the Peninsular War, thus George Napier describes how during the brief armistice "one poor German Officer in the French Army came to make inquiries about his brother who was in our service in the 60th Regiment which was at this time composed principally of foreigners, and upon looking about he *found him dead the poor fellow having been killed !*"¹

According to French accounts, General Simon actually led the *tirailleurs*² and was wounded in the face by a shrapnel bullet when close to the top and taken prisoner. Simon according to some accounts³ was

described as a very pretty quarrel but I am compelled to say that it is not always easy to follow out the contentions of either of these writers. One of the first necessities for understanding the disposition of troops is a good clear map. Professor Oman's maps are sometimes misleading, owing to the absence of proper scales of either yards or miles, of any data as to heights or the intervals between contours, the position of the north and other well-known and universally accepted requisites for "a good military map." Some of Chambers' maps also leave much to be desired. Hence it is often hard to follow out either author when comparing map with letter-press. Chambers having called the 5th/60th, the 5th Battalion of the 90th (no mere typographical error as the context on p. 14 will show): remarks on the absence of casualties in this non-existent corps. The 5th/60th did some hard fighting at Bussaco and lost many. The 90th were not in the Peninsula and never had a 5th Battalion.

I am indebted deeply to both these writers and more especially to Mr. Oman, whose researches among the French authorities are invaluable, but naturally like others they are exposed to the dangers which beset all writers on military history and in a peculiar way, non-military writers.

¹ Napier : *Early Military Life of General Sir George T. Napier*, p. 126.

² Fririon ; *Journal Historique de la Campagne de Portugal*.

³ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 84.

most excited and furious and demanded that he should be allowed to meet Craufurd in single combat, a request which was not complied with ! Later on a flag of truce came in bringing Simon's baggage and horses and according to Leach "with a pretty little Spanish woman, part of his establishment. The fair one was in tears and appeared much agitated."¹ The French account of the affair says that the lady in question was the *cantinière* of the 26th *Ligne* (one of Simon's Brigade), a young and pretty woman who loaded her donkey with the General's kit and, having brought it through our lines, returned in safety.²

Simon's shrapnel bullet wounds proved to be less serious than they appeared and caused Wellington to write that his opinion in favour of these shells had been much shaken lately. This because "their effect is confined to wounds of a very trifling description; and they kill nobody. I saw General Simon who was wounded by the balls from Shrapnel's shells, of which he had several in his face and head; but they were picked out of his face as duck-shot would be out of the face of a person who had been shot by accident while out shooting and he was not much more materially injured."³

Simon was sent to England on parole and lived at Odiham; later on he broke his parole and escaped but was caught in London and was afterwards kept a close prisoner at Dumbarton.⁴

¹ Leach, *Rough Sketches*, p. 167.

² Readers of Napier will recall his story of the "poor orphan Portuguese girl, about seventeen years of age and very handsome, who was seen coming down the mountain and driving an ass loaded with her property.

Mr. Chambers in his *Bussaco*, p. 103, says "an English officer writing from the front under date, 30th September 1810 says that a short time after Simon was captured a young Spanish lady in male attire whom the General had carried off from Madrid and his baggage were sent to the British head-quarters under a flag of truce." He also quotes from the diary of a Friar at the Convent of Bussaco (whence Simon had been taken after his capture) "the French General his wife and Secretary left for Coimbra on the 28th." Cynics have suggested that these ladies who thus figured at Bussaco were one and the same person!

³ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 12 March 1812.

⁴ Chambers, *Bussaco*, 104.

Loison's Division, the one that particularly interested the Light Division, had 21 officers and 141 men killed and 47 officers and 1,043 men wounded, a grand total of 1,252. Since the Division two weeks earlier was 4,557 strong¹ it would appear that the attempt to storm the heights cost them just about twenty-seven per cent. of its strength. The total French losses in this battle were fifty-five officers and 824 men killed and about 170 officers and 3,460 men wounded, a grand total of about 4,600 killed, wounded and missing.

Considering the overwhelming nature of the defeat these numbers seem hardly credible but it should be remembered that a large number of Frenchmen who were so roughly overthrown and hurled down the precipitous hill were unwounded and subsequently rejoined their units. No return of prisoners is given although when General Simon was wounded and taken we know that others were captured with him.²

The losses of the British-Portuguese force were small considering the decisive tactical victory gained, being only five officers and 99 men killed and fifty-seven officers and 999 men wounded or a total of 1,252 including a few missing. Of these, almost exactly one-half were British and one half Portuguese. The Light Division had few casualties and these were almost all incurred in the fighting about the villages and on the hillsides in the morning and only amounted to twenty-four men killed and six officers and 146 men wounded. The Rifles got off easily with only nine men killed and thirty-two wounded, not a single officer being hit.

Bussaco affords an interesting example of the wide discrepancy between losses as estimated and those actually incurred. Thus Masséna in an intercepted despatch to Napoleon from Coimbra on 4 October gave

¹ Oman, vol. iii, p. 553.

² Wellington in his despatch to Lord Liverpool, 30 September, 1810, mentions three Colonels, — officers and 250 men "taken prisoners."

Leach says "Simon whose Brigade was at the head of the Column which attacked the Light Division was wounded and made prisoner with three hundred of his men near the summit of the Sierra." *Rough Sketches*, p. 167. See also Oman, vol. iii, p. 553.

his own losses as 3,000 and said that the British admitted a loss of 4,000.¹ As we have seen the French archives put Masséna's at about 4,500 or fifty per cent. more and our own amended casualty returns show ours to have been only about 1,250 or less than one-third of the number imagined by Masséna.

On the other hand it is only fair to say that Wellington who witnessed the slaughter on the hillsides, in his despatch to Lord Liverpool claimed 2,000 Frenchmen "killed upon the field of battle,"² whereas the actual loss was, as already recorded, only about 900 or less than one-half, assuming that the French figures are trustworthy.

¹ *Well. Supp. Desp.* vi, p. 608.

² *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 30 September, 1810.

BUSSACO —
ATTACK ON LIGHT DIVISION

BUSSACO—
ATTACK ON LIGHT DIVISION

CHAPTER IX.

THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS, 1810.

The day after Bussaco—Masséna endeavours to march round Wellington's left flank—Wellington withdraws—The Light Division covers the retreat at Coimbra—The French sack Coimbra—Successive stands of the Light Division—Masséna first learns of the existence of the famous Lines—"King John's" tomb at Batalha—Narrow escape of rear-guard at Batalha—Trant's Portuguese capture Masséna's hospital at Coimbra—Sharp affair at Alemquer—Montbrun's cavalry press Craufurd—The Light Division reaches Arruda—The Lines of Torres Vedras described—Wellington's dispositions for their defence—The signal stations and "telegraphs"—Junot arrives at Sobral and is held up—Arrival of Masséna—Skirmish at the Serra de Agraça—The 3rd Battalion of the 95th Rifles receives its Baptism of Fire—The Sector held by the Light Division—Arrival of tents—Strengthening of the field defences—The French outpost line—Sad condition of Portuguese refugees—The French fall back from Arruda—The Light Division follows in pursuit—The French stand at Cartaxo—Wellington stops Craufurd's attack—Craufurd's speech to the men *pace* Leach—The French hold the Bridge at Santarem—Craufurd's nocturnal escapade—Winter Cantonments at Vallé—British Naval Officers and French sentries—The 2nd Battalion during 1810—The 3rd Battalion in 1810.

MASSÉNA, although he had been so roughly and unexpectedly repulsed in his attempt to crush Wellington's force at Bussaco, was far from being beaten and at once took steps to carry out his original widely-announced intention of "driving the leopard into the sea" by some other plan. Early on the morrow of the battle his cavalry pushed northward to seek for a road to Coimbra and soon after noon he received a report that the route from Mortagoa to Sardão across the Serra do Caramullo was passable by artillery. He at once ordered his cavalry division and baggage train to fall back and gain the Mortagoa-Sardão Road. Meanwhile he endeavoured to deceive Wellington by making feints on the heights with Ney's and Reynier's Corps and by throwing up some entrenchments.

See Map
"Lisbon-
Valladolid"
at end of
volume

Before night Wellington ascertained that some of the French infantry were withdrawing eastward whilst the cavalry was moving northward, and divining Masséna's intentions he at once decided to retire. The Light Division had been ordered to hold the enclosure around the Convent. Early the next morning deserters who came in said that Junot with 15,000 grenadiers were going to oust the Light Division. Our men watched the French constructing a half-moon battery and our guns sent a few shells among their working parties. Masséna sent forward swarms of light troops who were engaged with our Riflemen throughout the day but no attack came. In the evening the Rifles pushed forward and held the village of Sula. The Light Division and Anson's Brigade of Light Cavalry were now left as a rear-guard on the heights, the bivouac fires were heaped up, and after dark the whole army withdrew silently upon Fornos and Coimbra. During the night seven deserters came in and all agreed that the French were marching away northward.¹ And such proved to be the case for under cover of darkness Ney's Corps followed Junot's, which had been the one seen to march eastward during the previous day.

At 9 o'clock on the morning of the 29th the Light Division withdrew and marched about seven miles and bivouacked in a wood near Botão. A small force of Light Cavalry was left to watch the enemy's rear-guard. Reynier's Corps also retired on this day, leaving over seventy desperately wounded French men near Moura. These were found in a most pitiable state by the Hussars of the King's German Legion and taken by them to the Convent where the monks looked after them, as well as some few others they found on the 30th.² It is feared that several hundred more wounded, spoken of by Beamish,³ were murdered by the exasperated peasantry.

Trant, who had been ordered to be at Sardão on the 27th, was

¹ Leach, pp. 167-169, and MS. *Journal*.

² Chambers' *Bussaco*, pp. 141-178. ³ *History of the King's German Legion*, p. 292.

delayed by a Portuguese Commander and only reached that town late on the 28th, too late to oppose the French cavalry's advance through the Serra do Caramullo. When on the 30th Masséna reached Mealhada with two corps, Trant fell back on Oporto.

Wellington continued to retreat, the bulk of the army marching by the main road, whilst Hill moved on Thomar. On the 30th, when Wellington's last troops left Coimbra, there was wild confusion among the unfortunate civilian inhabitants many of whom had up till now disregarded his orders for them to abandon their homes and to take away or destroy all provisions. Tomkinson describes how the road for twenty miles towards Lisbon was encumbered by these poor fugitives.

Anson's cavalry were in touch with Masséna's on the evening of the 30th at Fornos only five miles north of Coimbra, and the following morning some French infantry came up and there was some sharp skirmishing between the advancing French dragoons and our cavalry, which crossed the Mondego by a ford and fell back on Soure.

The Light Division at dawn on 1 October held a position in front of Coimbra but, the enemy coming on in force, it had to fall back through the city.

Kincaid who was with the rear-guard describes how the Portuguese authorities in their hurried escape had entirely forgotten the inhabitants of the gaol, who were making a most hideous screaming for relief and how the British Quartermaster-General had the doors broken open and "the whole mob of rogues and ruffians were soon seen howling along the bridge into the wide world, in the most delightful delirium, with the French dragoons at their heels."

On the same day Masséna pushed southward on Coimbra. Foreseeing trouble if his half-starved troops got into such a well-provisioned and rich city, he sent on an advanced party to hold the gates, but Junot, who headed the main column, practically "forced the safeguard" thus posted by his chief and his Corps, the VIIIth, proceeded to sack the

place ! The VIth Corps was at once sent on to quell the pillage and arriving the next day promptly fell to and joined the marauders. All ranks from Masséna down, who himself took the instruments from the Observatory, then set to work to pillage the place. This disgraceful affair although disastrous to the wretched Portuguese had this advantage that for two whole days Masséna's army was unfit to advance and Wellington continued his retreat unmolested.

The cavalry and the Light Division held the line from Soure to Condeixa, seven miles south of Coimbra, on the 1st and 2nd and on the 3rd were near Pombal. Here it was necessary to destroy a lot of stores which our Commissariat with the main body had been obliged to abandon. Many rum puncheons were started and the gutters flowed with liquor as our men marched through the streets and several succeeded in getting drunk by dipping their tin tots or any vessel at hand into the mixture, "so inveterate is the propensity to drink in the soldier" moralizes Leach. Wellington reached Leiria on the 4th and put a stop to the inclination of some of the soldiers to pillage by promptly hanging several, both English and Portuguese.

On the 3rd Masséna was still at Coimbra and after a little hesitation sent Montbrun's cavalry and a division of Ney's Corps across the Mondego in pursuit of the English and the following day left Coimbra with the whole of his Army, leaving behind over 4,000 sick and wounded and his heavy train under a skeleton guard of 141 seamen, his excuse for doing so being that he expected to end the campaign in a week.

The Light Division reached Batalha on the 5th and on this day the cavalry of our rear-guard had a very spirited affair with the French cavalry near Pombal and drove it back. The losses were about equal on both sides, some twenty men killed, wounded and prisoners and it is said that it was from British prisoners taken on this day that Masséna *for the first time* learnt of the existence of the Lines of Torres Vedras.¹

¹ Tomkinson, pp. 48, 49.

Batalha is famous as the burying place of former sovereigns of Portugal of the House of Braganza and prior to the arrival of the Light Division the Cathedral had been visited by some marauders, for the Rifles found the coffin of "King John"¹ opened and His Majesty's embalmed body in rich robes of crimson velvet and gold exposed to view. Leach admits purloining a button and some gold fringe "by way of a relic" whilst Kincaid, more callous, records that a finger of the deceased monarch found its way into the baggage of the Rifles!

On this day the Light Division bivouacked in a wood in rear of Batalha, the right wing of the Rifle Corps being left in the town to occupy and hold two squares. They marched out at 9 p.m. and bivouacked at midnight in a wood on the Lisbon road. On the 6th the rearguard was at Cavalhães and on the following day in rear of the Rio Mayor and on the 8th at Alcoentre. Here our two cavalry Brigades nearly got into difficulties owing to careless work on the part of Sir Stapleton Cotton's staff. Bull's H.A. Battery, left without adequate protection in the town, narrowly escaped capture, the squadron of the 16th on rear-guard being driven in by two French regiments. Happily the indefatigable Somers Cocks with another squadron charged the French in the village with great spirit and drove them back with a loss of eighteen killed and prisoners.² The narrow escape from disaster on this occasion coupled with some minor contretemps seems to have sown a profound distrust of Cotton among the Riflemen; "cotton-head," they impolitely nick-named him. Whilst the above events were taking place Trant and his Portuguese had swept down on the rear of Masséna's column and on 7 October captured Coimbra and carried off some 4,500 wounded and sundries to Oporto. This mishap did not improve Masséna's relations with his men.

¹ Probably John IV, Duke of Braganza, born 1604, he became King in 1640 and died in 1656.

² Tomkinson, p. 50.

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Meanwhile on the 8th the weather had completely broken and on this and the following two days the retreat was carried on under a perfect deluge of rain. On the 9th the Light Division entered Alemquer. Here they were well-housed, the town being entirely deserted. On the 10th at about 2 o'clock when preparing dinners the French advance-guard, composed of cavalry and infantry, suddenly came on and some of our Companies were posted along the outskirts of the town to delay their advance. The Division eventually had to fall back leaving their rations to the French. The retreat then continued amid mud and water and shocking weather, the troops reaching Arruda on a dark tempestuous night soaked with rain and half-famished. Here they found excellent shelter and some food, a most joyful surprise to everybody after the miseries and discomforts of the preceding five days.

It has been said that Craufurd was taken by surprise by the vigorous French pursuit at Alemquer and that in his anxiety to get his troops clear of the town he threw them into confusion. But there is no allusion whatever to this in any of the journals I have seen, and had it been the case, Leach would hardly have missed such a chance of censuring his chief. As it is, Leach's journal contains no reference whatever to the scene described by some writers, and is confined to abuse of the appalling weather and his joy at finding such good quarters at Arruda.

The force which pressed Craufurd at Alemquer on this day was Montbrun's cavalry which was some fifteen miles in advance of Masséna's main body then at Alcoentre and a single brigade of infantry (Taupin's).

After leaving Alemquer Craufurd unfortunately, after dark, took the wrong road and marched to Sobral instead of to Arruda. Here he found the 1st Division and had to incline to his left for nearly five miles to reach his appointed post. Meanwhile Hill who had marched from Santarem to Alhandra on the Tagus finding that Arruda was not held, fell back to Alverca, so as to fill the gap. Thus it was that for a few hours the line Alhandra—Arruda was not held but there

was no real danger since Taupin's solitary brigade did not advance beyond Alemquer.

George Simmons and Harry Smith with a detachment of convalescents who had marched up from Belem (where they had been since they were wounded at the Coa) arrived at 8 o'clock in the evening of the 9th and Simmons says "the Quartermasters of Regiments came in soon after, the town was divided and the troops followed. I took possession of a good house for Captain O'Hare's officers and had a good fire against their arrival."

THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS.

It will be recalled how in October 1809 Wellington had caused a scheme to be prepared to defend Lisbon by means of strong entrenchments reaching from the Tagus to the sea, whither, if attacked by superior forces, he reckoned he would be able to withdraw, and thus secure his communications, or if the worst came, to re-embark.

The lines as originally designed ran from near Alverca on the Tagus about twelve miles above Lisbon to the shores of the Atlantic at Rio São Lourenço a distance of twenty-two miles. In front of this line he ordered two strong positions, at Torres Vedras and Monte Agraça as well as some minor ones to be held as "advanced posts." Owing however to the ample time and also to the enormous amount of labour available, another still more advanced line, twenty-nine miles in length, was constructed, connecting up these posts by a series of works, with its right on Alhandra and its left on the Atlantic at the mouth of the Zizandre river. Near Lisbon at São Julião, a third line of defences over two miles in extent, designed to cover an embarkation, should the main line of defence be pierced, was also thrown up. It will thus be seen that no less than fifty-three miles of works had to be constructed. The designer of these stupendous works was Colonel Fletcher of the Royal

Engineers with Major John Jones as his assistant, who had eleven British, two King's German and three Portuguese Engineer Officers to supervise their construction. The country enclosed within these widely-extending lines is extremely hilly and broken ; the southern arm of the great Serra da Estrella runs down the centre of the Lisbon Peninsula and terminates in a series of lateral spurs, these were utilized by the British engineers as successive lines of defence. Broadly the system of defence was based on chains of small closed works, each armed with three to six guns and garrisoned by 200 to 300 men. They were well provided with deep ditches revetted with masonry and with stout parapets and good banquettes, the guns firing through masonry embrasures. The armament of these works was for the greater part Naval guns, some of heavy calibre and of course infinitely more powerful than anything with a field army, such as Masséna's.¹

These works were carefully designed and so placed as to support one another and bring a cross-fire on intervening ground. Enormous trouble was taken to clear the field of fire in front of them, to fill in dead ground, and to make them as inaccessible to an enemy as possible. At Monte Agraça, roughly one-third of the distance from the Tagus to the sea, a big redoubt with twenty-five guns on a hill over 1,400 feet high dominated the surrounding country. Midway between Monte Agraça and the sea was a powerful bridge-head on the Zizandre known as the entrenched camp of São Vincente, north of Torres Vedras. This was a most important point, barring the main paved road from Coimbra to Lisbon.

So much for the defences, now for the plan of defence.

¹ A good general description of the defences of Torres Vedras will be found in Oman, vol. iii, p. 419. As a proof of the excellence of the construction of these works, when I visited a portion of the Lines in the Spring of 1913 most of the defences, especially the masonry revetments, magazines and embrasures, although abandoned for over a century, were still in the most excellent condition of preservation.

The first section of the defence, from Alhandra to Arruda, some five miles, was protected on its right flank by the Tagus where a flotilla of gunboats manned by the Royal Navy was ever ready to have a shot at anybody. The front was rendered difficult to approach by an inundation on the right and steeply-scarped hills and abatis. It comprised twenty-three redoubts mounting ninety-six guns and was held by Hill's Division. The next section extended across the five miles from Arruda to Monte Agraça. Pack's Brigade supported by Leith's Division held Monte Agraça and the Light Division was responsible for the ground eastward through which wound the two roads from Alemquer on Sobral and Arruda. The third section comprised some eight miles westward to Torres Vedras and here Wellington had the 1st, 4th and 6th Divisions with his Head-quarters at Pero Negro close to the main Coimbra road. The last section ran from Torres Vedras to the sea, about ten miles. The lower reaches of the Zizandre were converted into a huge inundation by damming the stream. Picton's Division held the entrenched camp of São Vicente north of Torres Vedras. So much for the first line of defence, the second was even stronger and more perfected, but since Masséna never got through the first it is not necessary to describe it here.

For the defence of the Lines, not reckoning the gunboats in the Tagus and some 2,000 Royal Marines who held the lines of São Julião, Wellington had 42,000 British troops of whom 35,000 were effective and 24,500 effective Portuguese, making a total of 60,000 regulars. In addition to these he had 12,000 Portuguese militia and La Romana's 8,000 Spaniards, making an additional 20,000 men sufficiently trained to hold entrenchments. Beyond these was the Portuguese *Ordenança*, 25,000 strong, of doubtful military value but useful for irregular warfare and military services. Since the first line of defence only required 20,000 men to hold it, Wellington was thus in a position to use all the regular troops as a mobile field-force ready to repel an attack at any point.

We have seen that he had distributed this in two main groups on his right and centre near the most probable lines of approach. By a judicious system of improved communications and lateral roads he made it easy to move them in any required direction whilst the entire absence of all lateral roads in front of the Lines, combined with the peculiar topography of the hills prevented an enemy from attempting any similar operation. Lastly by means of signal stations "telegraphs"—as they were called in those days—at carefully selected stations, it was made possible to pass orders rapidly to any point of the Lines. These stations were under charge of the Navy and so skilled were the signalmen that it was found easy to pass messages from flank to flank of the twenty-nine miles of redoubts in seven minutes whilst any orders by Wellington from Head-quarters at Pero Negro were received at the most outlying points in under four minutes.

It was on 11 October that Montbrun with his cavalry made the discovery that all further advance was barred by a continuous line of works from the Tagus to the sea and he sent this most disagreeable and totally unexpected information to Masséna.

Later, on the 12th, Junot's Corps reached Sobral and drove in the British outposts there. Wellington during the night brought up five Divisions and some Portuguese brigades in front of the Monte Agraça. Next day there was renewed skirmishing and each side lost about 150 men killed and wounded, the British withdrawing. Again on the 14th there was some fighting of a more determined character during which Masséna arrived and for the first time saw the Lines for himself.

Declining to risk an attack on such a strong position he ordered Junot with the VIIIth Corps to entrench himself before Sobral and Reynier with the IInd Corps to hold Villa Franca. Ney with the VIth, was at Alemquer whilst he posted some cavalry at Alcoentre. His nearest reinforcement was Mortier's Vth Corps in Alemtejo, but so

long as there was no means of passing the Tagus this was of little use to him. His only other available support was the IXth Corps (Drouet) but this was still at Valladolid. It is no exaggeration to state that this day, 14 October 1810, was the turning point of Napoleon's successes in the Peninsula. Three years had passed since his first irruption in 1807 and although three more years elapsed before the French were driven out of Spain, from this time forward Great Britain's strength in the Peninsula steadily increased.

A small point of purely Regimental interest serves to fix the date of Napoleon's furthest in the great Peninsular War. We have seen how Spencer on the 14th and the previous day, had a sharp affair with some of Junot's troops below the Monte Agraça. With Spencer were a Company of British Riflemen belonging to our newly raised 3rd Battalion. This Company with two others had been sent out from England to Cadiz in March and upon Wellington applying for more troops Lord Liverpool ordered some Light Dragoons, the 71st and 94th Regiments and Captain Percival's Company¹ of the 3rd Battalion to proceed from Cadiz to Lisbon. Spencer being at the time Colonel-Commandant of the 3rd Battalion seems to have seized upon this Company at Sobral when on the march from Figueira and attached it to his own Division. It was a somewhat high-handed proceeding since the Company was on its way to join the Light Division but the result was that instead of a march in the rain to Arruda the Company had the honour to be the first of the newly raised 3rd Battalion to meet the enemy and was very sharply engaged when Spencer's light troops were driven in. Captain Percival was severely wounded and Lieutenant C. Eeles was shot through the body and many men were killed and wounded.² The Company fought well and distinguished itself and Simmons records, "The 3rd Battalion Company behaved *like Rifle Men*

¹ *Well. Supp. Desp.*, vi, p. 569 (note). Also *Well. Desp.*

² Leach, p. 177.

and were complimented!"¹ This was most satisfactory to all concerned for every soldier knows how critically the conduct of a newly raised Battalion is watched by those more senior.

Within a few days of the arrival of our troops at the Lines, Portuguese tents were provided for most of the men but they were far from weather-proof. The Light Division camp was pitched along the fortified heights and was occupied by night; by day the men took shelter in the town below whence the inhabitants had all fled. By degrees our men brought up chairs and tables from the deserted houses as well as various other most unlikely articles of furniture which appealed to their fancy, a full-length looking glass being a great favourite according to Kincaid. Both British and Portuguese troops were set to work to strengthen the positions assigned to them by throwing up additional field-works and forming abatis wherever required. The French also set to work to entrench their positions. Craufurd was now once again in his element in close touch with the enemy and Napier has given an excellent account of how by his energy and vigilance he deterred Masséna from making any attempt to break in near Alhandra.

"The ground about Arruda did not give him [Masséna] a view of the troops although he frequently skirmished to make Craufurd show his force; but that General, by occupying Arruda as an advanced post, had rendered it impossible to discover his true situation without a serious affair, and in an incredibly short space of time he secured his position in a manner worthy of admiration. Across the ravine on the left a loose stone wall, sixteen feet thick and forty feet high, was raised; across the great valley of Arruda a double line of abatis was drawn, not, as usual, of the limbs of trees, but of full grown oaks and chestnuts digged up with all their roots and branches, dragged by main force for several hundred yards and then reset and crossed so that no human strength could break through. Breast-works, at convenient distances

¹ Simmons, p. 112.

to defend this line of trees, were also cast up ; and along the summits of the mountain, for a space of nearly three miles including the salient points, other stone walls six feet high by four in thickness, with banquettes, were piled up ! Romans never raised greater works in the time !”¹

Between the advanced piquets of the Light Division and those of the enemy there lay a wide open valley which at first was much visited by French foraging parties but by the end of the first week it was swept clear of everything. Sometimes our piquets had small adventures with the enemy. The French were in the habit of searching the empty farms and cottages for food and on the 23rd two subalterns, Hopwood and Simmons, with three Riflemen on piquet having watched a couple of Frenchmen enter a house, crawled up to it and evading the notice of the French vedettes surprised the two men who were filling their canteens with wine. The Frenchmen sprang to their arms and one snapped his musket which however missed fire. Sending back the men to the piquet they got sixty canteens and filled them all with excellent wine.

Nor did the monotony of the life or the bad weather prevent the younger officers from indulging in such mischief as lay within their somewhat narrow field of enterprise. Simmons and Strode one day found a poor old woman lying dead near the altar in the church at Arruda, probably from starvation. Ever anxious to oblige they procured a crowbar and opening “A beautiful marble tomb covered with armorial blazonary” laid the poor old creature to rest and closed it carefully. Kincaid who bore a hand in what he viewed a most meritorious task moralizes on the surprise the proper owner of the tomb must have felt next time it was opened !

In addition to the military population within the Lines of Torres Vedras which, including Portuguese irregulars, did not amount to less than 100,000, there was an enormous number of unfortunate Portuguese

¹ Napier, vol. iii, p. 45.

who had fled from their homes on the approach of the invaders and sought refuge in our lines. Hundreds of these were houseless and although every effort was made to assist them from Lisbon and by subscriptions raised in England, a great number died of want and exposure. The British Army did all they could to help these wretched people and in the Light Division (and no doubt in others also) the heads and offal of the cattle killed for rations were boiled into soup and issued to the starving. Meanwhile Masséna's troops were having a bad time of it. Deserters came into our lines constantly and there were reports of much sickness among the French troops, also of a great lack of provisions and of the difficulty of foraging owing to the not unreasonable hatred of the Portuguese, who cut off and murdered any small parties. The Spaniards also were harrying the French lines of communication and making it almost impossible to bring up supplies of any sort. In consequence it was necessary to send out foraging parties of some strength, thus a patrol of the 16th Light Dragoons came across one of 200 infantry of which half were armed and the remainder carried whatever provisions they could gather whilst some cavalry looked after their security.¹

On 2 November bell tents arrived from England and were found a great improvement on the poor and small Portuguese tents. On 13 November the Light Division received a most undesirable addition in the shape of a corps of German riflemen known as the Duke of Brunswick's Oel's Corps ; as will be seen they did not remain with it very long. All around about where the Light Division lay were vineyards, at this season full of ripe grapes. At first our men made up parties to gather them but it was found less trouble to watch until some of the native thieves who lurked about the camp had picked a basketful when one of our men would go up and, putting his back against that of the luckless Portuguese, would relieve him of

¹ Tomkinson, p. 57.

his load. It is at least some consolation to learn that the basket was generally returned to the owner when emptied !

Life dragged on in this manner for four weeks. Meanwhile Masséna's Army was literally starving and on 10 November he ordered a retreat on Santarem, the sick were sent off on the 13th, the reserves and stores followed, and on the night of the 14th the infantry marched off silently after dark. Ney's Corps led and Junot's followed. Reynier remained at Villa Franca to keep back Hill should he pursue. During the night a dense fog, which did not clear till 10 a.m. on the 15th considerably assisted the French in their withdrawal. At grey dawn on the 15th the officer with the advanced piquet of the Rifles saw what he reckoned to be the French sentries at their usual posts, but as it grew lighter and the mist lifted he found he had been deceived by the old French trick of leaving straw figures surmounted by uniform caps and with poles to represent muskets. Reconnoitring patrols soon ascertained that the sentries and piquets alike were gone and that the French Army had retired. It was very clear that "the frightened leopard" was to have a respite, for the time being at any rate !

Soon after 10 o'clock Spencer's Division was on the march from Sobral to Alemquer and the Light Division was ordered to feel its way towards the same point, whilst Hill advanced from Alhandra to Carregado. Wellington suspecting an attack on Abrantes ordered Fane who was on the south bank of the Tagus with some Portuguese cavalry and caçadores to move on that town and asked Admiral Berkeley to send up boats to enable him to send across Hill to join Fane if required.

It is not certain what hour Craufurd was ordered to advance, but the Light Division did not move off till 3 p.m. when it marched in pursuit along the road to Alemquer and bivouacked near that town. Several deserted encampments of the enemy were passed on the way and

found to be in a most filthy state, with dead soldiers in some of the huts. At daylight on the 16th the advance was resumed to Azimbuja,¹ which was reached at 1 o'clock; the French rear-guard having left it at 10 a.m. Many stragglers and sick were captured during the day by our men and the whole route was strewn with the dead bodies of animals and the débris of a retreating army. On the 17th the Division advanced seven miles and the cavalry in advance found the French in position at Cartaxo showing six squadrons of cavalry and three battalions of infantry drawn up on some rising ground in an open place covered with heath and scrub. The Light Division came on the scene at about midday and Craufurd somewhat hastily assuming that he had merely a rear-guard to deal with at once ordered the infantry of the Division to deploy into line of battalions and to attack, Ross's guns and a solitary squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons being his only support. Just as the advance was about to be made Lord Wellington who had received information of what was impending, suddenly appeared on the scene and instantly ordered a halt, for he divined (and rightly as it turned out) that behind the crest line held by the rear-guard lay Junot's whole corps. Since Junot had about 3,000 cavalry and artillery as well as about 18,000 infantry it must be admitted that Craufurd's conduct on this occasion was somewhat hasty. The French withdrew and the Division halted for the night in Cartaxo. Evidently the protracted stay in the Lines had not improved the march discipline of the Division for Leach favours us in his journal with this entry under date 18 November 1810 (the italics are in the original MS.).

"The following speech was made by General Craufurd yesterday to the Light Brigade *a few minutes before we were to have attacked the French lines, as was then intended but did not take place.*

"If I ever have occasion to observe *any man* of the Brigade pick his road on the march and go *round* a pool of water instead of marching

¹ Kincaid's dates are wrong here, being four days in advance.

through it I am fully *determined* to bring the officer commanding the Company to which that man belongs to a *Court Martial*. Should the Court *acquit* the *officer* it shall not *deter me* from repeating the same ceremony on any other officer *again and again*. Every *halting* day (if necessary) I will bring an officer to a *Court Martial* who shall *presume* to *allow* the men of *his Company* to go out of the way of a pool of water. I will insist on every *soldier* marching *through water* and I will *flog any man* attempting to *avoid* it."

This, with some other blackguard language was the substance of his *harangue*. A speech well calculated *no doubt* to make *men and officers* adore their leader and follow him enthusiastically up the French heights."

At daybreak on the 18th the Division advanced across a big plain, the French falling back to the swampy banks of the Rio Mayor which they crossed by means of a causeway and bridge. Our cavalry pushed on and dismounting, posted a piquet close to the bridge and some desultory firing took place. Soon the infantry came up and Simmons says that our horse soldiers "were highly pleased to see me arrive with some of my Rifle Men and take the post of honour from them." The French now sent a few men along the bridge and opened fire but Simmons with three of his men crawled along the bridge and lay down by a dead mule where they "had a good rest and took deliberate aim." Before long the superiority of the Baker rifle over the carbines of our gallant Light Dragoons caused the French "to become wary of showing themselves." At nightfall a company of the 52nd were sent to hold the bridge.

It was a wet night and Craufurd seems to have imagined that the French were going to steal a march on him once again as they had on the night of the 14th and so visited the piquet alone. Taking three of the 52nd with him he walked across the bridge and with the natural result that first the French sentry and then the whole piquet fired on

him, a fire which he returned with his three men.¹ This naturally enough caused a false alarm and one of Reynier's Divisions opened a heavy fire on everything and everybody ! Anyhow Craufurd established the fact that the French had *not* retreated and when daylight came, it was found that they had been strengthening their front and flanks by abatis and evidently contemplated a prolonged resistance to our advance.

Masséna's position was a strong one. In front of him was the marshy plain of the Rio Mayor only passable by a raised causeway over half a mile in length with bridges over the deep muddy channels. His left was secure on the Tagus and his right on some hills strong by nature and protected by abatis. In rear was the town of Santarem surrounded by an ancient wall. To hold this he had Reynier's Corps with Junot's in support. Ney was at Thomar with Loison's Division in advance of him.

Wellington had only the Light and Spencer's Division with him, Hill he had sent across the Tagus the previous day. On 20 November Wellington made a reconnaissance of Masséna's left with the Light Division and some squadrons of cavalry. Our Rifles were started early and crossing the river came in touch with the French light troops amid the olive groves on the hills beyond and skirmished with them until noon. No formed bodies of French were seen. Three men were wounded. The weather was very bad all this day as well as on the succeeding ones and Wellington having come to the conclusion that he held the whole of Masséna's force in front of him decided to leave starvation to do its work and to go into winter quarters.

¹ Leach describes this in his Journal. "General Craufurd (among his other unaccountable actions) rode down to the advanced piquets on the bridge at midnight and without saying a syllable to the Field Officer of the Piquet, he went up to our advanced sentry took his musket out of his hand and moved towards the advanced sentry of the enemy at whom he *fired* which of *course* was returned and in an instant the whole French piquet opened a fire on the bridge and blazed away for some minutes on our piquet but fortunately no one was hurt."

By 1 December our cavalry were cantoned along the Rio Mayor from Cartaxo to Rio Mayor village, the 1st Division was at Cartaxo with the 4th behind it at Azimbuja, the 5th at Alcoentre and the 6th at Alemquer. The Light Division was put into cantonments about Vallé, the Rifles being in some straggling farm houses on the bank of the river whence they could see the French advanced posts on the wooded heights on the far side of the stream. On the 26th Craufurd ordered the abatis on the bridge to be pushed forward beyond it so as to clear the road should it be necessary to destroy it; the French allowed this to be done without molestation. Our sentries on the causeway were less than 200 yards from the French sentries and sometimes only 150 yards. The causeway was at this time in charge of the Light Division, 300 men being always on piquet at the head of the bridge with more on inlying piquet near at hand. The bridge was mined and always ready for demolition, with abatis in front of it as already described. Some light entrenchments in the shape of covered ways and traverses were also constructed. The French on their side of the river were equally busy and constructed a very neat battery on a little hill with guns posted so as to enfilade the bridge. Here they kept about a brigade of infantry.¹ The sentries of the two armies were so close to one another as also were those of the cavalry vedettes on the right that they might often have conversed. By degrees our light troops and those of the French on outpost duty were finding out the truth that no military advantage is to be gained by shooting sentries or disturbing outpost lines. Yet less than six months back in June when Ney's troops were holding the line of the Agueda and later, of the Dos Casas, it was a common habit on both sides to shoot at sentries.² Kincaid describes how at Santarem our Naval officers used to ride out from Lisbon to pay a visit to the advanced posts carrying huge ships' spy-glasses like six pounders. Their first question invariably was "who is that fellow

¹ *Rough Sketches*, p. 187.

² Costello, p. 32, also p. 49 as to Arruda.

there ? ” (pointing to the enemy’s sentry close to us) and, on being told that he was a Frenchman, “ Then why the devil don’t you shoot him ? ”

But whilst the British troops and their allies thus lived in comparative comfort, and with ample supplies, thanks to the sea-power of England and their secure base at Lisbon, such was by no means the case with their foes. During the closing weeks of the year 1810, Masséna’s position was indeed an extraordinary one. As we have seen he had cut himself adrift from his line of communications through Ciudad Rodrigo and Central Portugal and owing to Wellington’s dispositions of the Portuguese army, militia and *Ordenança*, which drew a line round his rear from Peniche on the Atlantic coast to the Tagus near Castello Branco, he had actually been without any news whatever from the outside world since September.

As it was the accepted custom of the French to live on the country, he was in consequence in desperate straits to feed his men. All the same, Wellington’s order to the unfortunate Portuguese to remove or destroy the supplies had not been thoroughly carried out and much food had been buried or otherwise concealed. Wellington had reckoned that Masséna would be compelled for want of food to fall back on Spain by the end of the year, but here he was wrong for the French by means of foraging parties and using drastic measures to compel the wretched peasantry to disclose their hidden supplies, managed somehow to exist and to hold on for over two months longer. So Masséna clung to his position on the Rio Mayor in the vain hope that he might receive reinforcements sufficient to carry out his projects against Wellington ; meanwhile starvation and privations were doing their work. Reynier’s Corps which faced our men at Santarem, already reduced by 2,000 men at Bussaco, had shrunk from 15,000 to 12,000 by the end of the year. Ney’s Corps which had also lost about 2,000 men at Bussaco, was reduced from 22,000 to 18,000 whilst Junot’s

Corps, which numbered many young soldiers in its ranks had fallen to about 11,000. In fact, Masséna including his reserve cavalry and artillery, could not reckon upon much more than 45,000 effective men of all ranks. Masséna wished to be able to cross the Tagus so as to co-operate with any French force which might come from the south to his assistance and at first projected bridging the river at Santarem. This however the British gunboats made impossible. So he decided to collect materials at Punhete at the mouth of the Zezere, twenty-five miles up-stream and established a regular dockyard there for that purpose. Wellington's reply to this was to reinforce Beresford's force in Alemtejo with a British and a Spanish brigade and to construct batteries on the south bank opposite to Punhete.

At last on 26 December Masséna once again got touch of the outer world, for the advanced cavalry of Drouet's¹ IXth Corps marching by Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo appeared in the valley of the Mondego near Ponte da Murcella. Drouet detached 6,000 men under Claparède to keep up his communications and pushing on with 8,000, eventually reached Leiria and interviewed Ney at Thomar. Meanwhile Claparède had some sharp fights near Trancoso with Silveira's Portuguese whom he drove northward but he was too weak to do more and eventually fell back on Celorico and Guarda where he was completely cut off from Drouet, for Trant and Wilson with their Portuguese troops who had moved northward on Drouet's advance at once re-occupied Coimbra and Penacova. Drouet's Corps therefore so far from bringing Masséna sufficient reinforcements to attack Wellington only added to his army 8,000 somewhat raw troops which might be viewed as mere drafts. He also brought a little ammunition with him which was much needed. Masséna's only remaining hope now was Soult who had his hands tolerably full in Andalucia.

Returning to the Light Division in their cantonments on the Rio

¹ Better known to English readers by his subsequent title of Count d'Erlon.

Mayor, Leach tells us that on 30 December they paraded at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and were given "a flaming speech from Craufurd." The following day he pointed out the alarm posts of every Regiment and every Company in the Division.

Thus closed for the Light Division a year of adventure, privation and hardship, of marching and of intermittent fighting, such as it has been the fate of few to experience. But it was during these eventful months that the Regiments comprising it were being welded in the rough school of war into the famous fighting Division whose deeds will endure in the history of the British Army for all time.

NOTES ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE REGIMENT IN 1809-1810.

The strength of the 1st Battalion in July 1809 prior to the march to Talavera was 49 officers, 57 Sergeants, 18 Buglers and 1,023 Rank and File. Of these 66 were at the time on the sick-list and 4 "on command," the total present and fit for duty being 953 Rank and File.

After Talavera, 6 Sergeants and 44 men were received from the 1st Battalion of Detachments and it is interesting to note that this was the only "draft" received by the 1st Battalion during the years 1809, 1810 and 1811. As a natural consequence the numbers of men shown in the monthly returns steadily decrease and in December 1809 there were only 813 Rank and File "present and fit for duty" whilst no less than 148 were "sick." Since landing at Lisbon in the preceding May, 2 Sergeants, 1 Bugler, and 77 Rank and File had died.¹

The monthly return for January 1810 shows ten Companies with 957 Rank and File of which 148 are "sick" and 798 "present and fit for duty." In the July return ten Companies are shown with a total of

¹ Not "400" as stated by Costello, p. 20.

840 Rank and File, with 110 sick and 723 fit for duty, this reduction being mainly due to the losses at the Coa. In subsequent returns there are more reductions due to the Battle of Bussaco and retirement on Torres Vedras. Thus it comes about that the return for 25 December 1810 shows 803 Rank and File of which 104 are in hospital and only 682 present and fit for duty.

We must now follow out the career of the 2nd Battalion which we left at Hythe Barracks after its return from Walcheren. In January 1810 it was still at Hythe under Lieutenant-Colonel Hamlet Wade and had, as the Pay Lists show, ten Companies, over 909 Rank and File.

When in February 1810 General Graham was appointed to command at Cadiz he asked to be reinforced by some of the 95th Rifles but received reply from the Secretary of State on 27 February to say that "a very unsatisfactory report had been received from the Horse Guards on the present state of the Rifle Battalions. The men of the Second are still extremely weak from the consequences of the Walcheren fever and those of the Third, though efficient men, are not far advanced in their Instruction as Rifle men. However three Companies of the former and two of the latter will embark immediately."

In consequence, on 6 March two Companies, Captain Daniel Cadoux's and Captain Jenkins's embarked for Spain and joined General Graham's force at Cadiz.¹ In June a third Company, Captain Charles Beckwith's, marched from Hythe to Hilsea and in July shipped in H.M.S. *Rodney*, shifting the following month to the *Mary* transport. This Company landed at Lisbon on 15 September and joined the 1st Battalion at Coimbra about 2 October, during the retirement after Bussaco, and served with it in the Lines of Torres Vedras.²

¹ See p. 88 *ante*.

² Monthly Return, 25 September 1810. Strength: 4 Officers, 1 Surgeon, 6 Sergeants, 2 Buglers and 102 Rank and File. The Pay Lists show it was at Arruda in October and at Vallé in December.

The last Pay List for 1810 shows the seven remaining Companies of the 2nd Battalion at Hythe with a full complement of N.C.O.s and Buglers and 564 Rank and File.

Turning now to the 3rd Battalion. The first Pay List is from 25 April to 24 June 1809 and shows the Battalion of six Companies under Colonel N. McLeod with Major John Ross, six Captains, five Lieutenants, eleven 2nd Lieutenants, Quartermaster William Surtees,¹ and an immense roll of N.C.O.s and some 1300 men, of which many are marked off "to 2nd Batt." In the second Pay List, eight Companies appear, with 1134 Rank and File. In September, "Recruiting Companies" of ten Sergeants and ten Corporals with Buglers,² from both 1st and 2nd Battalions are attached for pay. At the end of the year all ten Companies are shown at full strength³ and in addition there is a "Recruiting Company 1st Battalion" attached.

Early in 1810, the 3rd Battalion marched to Brabourne Lees,⁴ one of the Camps formed as a support to the general system of coast defence of the Romney Marsh district during the threat of invasion by Bonaparte.

The construction of the Royal Military Canal from Hythe to Rye has ever been a favourite object of ridicule for the ignorant. As a means of causing an inundation below the heights from Lympne to Appledore it fully justified its construction and would have increased

¹ The author of the well-known *Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade*, published in 1833.

² The Buglers are thus officially styled in this roll. As a rule in most rolls of this period, they are sternly entered as "Drummers!"

³ Namely, 1 Lieutenant-Colonel, 2 Majors, 8 Captains, 6 Lieutenants, 7 2nd Lieutenants and 3 "Staff," with 56 Sergeants, 59 Corporals, 23 Buglers and 955 Private Riflemen.

⁴ This camp styled "Barracks" like all similar places, was on the road from the present station at Smeeth to Brabourne village. It consisted of hutments and small houses adapted for military occupation.

enormously the difficulties of an invading force landed anywhere on the Dungeness peninsula. The troops massed at Hythe, Brabourne Lees, Ashford, &c., were detailed for the defence of these heights.

On 29 March Lieutenant-Colonel Norman McLeod who had joined the Rifles in 1804 and who had been appointed to command the 3rd Battalion on its formation, exchanged to the 1st Foot with Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Barnard. This officer had at the time 16 years service having joined the 90th Regiment in 1794 and after serving a brief time in the 81st and 55th Regiments, been appointed to the 1st Foot Guards in 1799. After eight years service in the Guards he, in December 1808 exchanged to the 1st Foot and fourteen months later, to the 95th Rifles. It will thus be seen that most of his service prior to joining the Rifles was in the Grenadiers. His subsequent brilliant career as a Rifleman will be found recorded in this History.

In June 1810 three Companies were sent out to Cadiz, namely those of Captains Percival, Knipe and Gray.¹ Graham writing from Cadiz to the Secretary of State on 17 June says that the three Companies of the 3rd Battalion 95th "are very raw, few of the officers and none of the men having yet been on service, being chiefly young lads from the Militia. The two Companies of the 2nd Battalion, so good in all respects, are not yet recovered from the effects of the Walcheren fever."

On 11 June, only a few weeks over a year since the Battalion was formed, Barnard with the "Head-quarters" and the two remaining Companies, those of Captains Fullarton and Pratt, of what was styled the "right wing" of the Battalion embarked at Portsmouth on board the *Mercury* Naval transport and landed at Cadiz on the 29th. It will be recalled how Captain Percival's Company had been sent from Cadiz

¹ Strength: 1 Major, 3 Captains, 5 Lieutenants, 3 2nd Lieutenants, 1 Assistant Surgeon, 15 Sergeants, 6 Buglers and 298 Private Riflemen.

to Lisbon to join Wellington on 16 August, thus reducing Barnard's command at Cadiz to four Companies. Major Amos Norcott was sent there to command the two 2nd Battalion Companies. It was not long before these six Companies of our Riflemen had some varied and interesting experiences.

The last Muster Rolls of 1810 show four Companies: Major Ross's, Knipe's, Gray's and Fullarton's with 376 Rank and File in the Isla de Leon under Barnard, one under Percival in Portugal with 97 Rank and File and a *cadre* of five Companies "the left wing 3/95th" with 194 Rank and File at Ashford.

CHAPTER X.

THE CAMPAIGN OF BARROSA, 1811.

Position of French Northern Armies in 1810—Activity of Spanish *guerrilleros* against the French lines of communication—Some famous Brigand Chiefs—Deplorable results of guerrilla warfare—Terrible reprisals on both sides—Suchet's operations in Catalonia; he captures Lerida and Tortosa—Soult's operations in Andalucia—Sebastiani raids Murcia—Napoleon orders Soult to assist Masséna with Mortier's Corps—Soult's campaign in Estremadura; he captures Badajoz—Victor's position at Cadiz—The Allies plan an attack on his rear—The landing at Algeciras and march to Tarifa—Night march on Casas Viejas—The flank march on Vejer—Fording the Laguna de la Janda—The advance on Barrosa—Numbers of the contending forces—Description of the battlefield—The fight on the Almanza Creek—La Peña marches on the Isla and orders Graham to follow—Marshal Victor's sudden appearance—Graham's quick resolve to fight—Browne's Flank Battalion attacks and is driven back—Norcott's Riflemen cover the right attack—Major-General Dilkes's Brigade advances—Capture of the Cerro and defeat of Ruffin's Division—Barnard's Riflemen cover the left attack—Brigadier-General Wheatley's Brigade advances—Graham's charge—Overthrow of Leval's Division—Victor retires—La Peña's fatal inaction—End of the battle—Losses of British and French—Losses of the Rifles—Trophies of the fight—Graham's praise of Barnard and Norcott and of the Riflemen—Wellington's approbation of Graham—La Peña's reward—The results of the campaign—Incidents of the fight—The 3rd Battalion on rear-guard—Notes on the topography of the battlefield—Popular error with regard to "Barrosa Hill."

ALTHOUGH during the year 1810 there had been many movements and counter-movements of both French and Spanish troops, the general situation had changed but little.

See Map
"Spain and
Portugal"
at end of
volume.

In the north, from Bayonne to Galicia, there were altogether some 72,000 French troops but for many reasons this great force was never able to be used with effect. Great Britain's command of the sea and possession of Coruña and Ferrol gave her the power to assist any

Spanish rising alike with arms and ammunition or to organize and assist raids along the coast of Biscay. To meet these about 20,000 French troops were continuously employed.

The activities of the Spanish *guerrilleros* in old Castile and Navarre along Napoleon's main line of communications kept Drouet with his IXth Corps (whose presence Masséna so anxiously expected) and other bodies amounting altogether to 38,000 busy from September to November. At one time the famous brigand chief Mina had no less than 18,000 French troops, over five times the number of men at his disposal, hunting him and his elusive bands. Another famous leader, Julian Sanchez, with some 400 well-mounted lancers, "worked" the plain of Leon and severed all communications with Valladolid, Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo. A third group under Louga operated in the sierras of Santander and raided the routes between Bilbao, Burgos and Santander. These with other small parties probably never numbered more than 20,000 men at any one time, but they succeeded in making the whole district from the Guadarrama Mountains to the Bay of Biscay dangerous for detachments of under two or three battalions and almost impassable for either reconnoitring parties or despatch-riders and above all, they kept over double their number of good French troops constantly employed.

One deplorable outcome of this guerrilla warfare was the savage reprisals which it led to. The French from the first made it their custom to shoot every prisoner they captured and to burn and destroy every village which harboured *guerrilleros*. The Spaniards who had begun by murdering every isolated patrol or straggling Frenchman quickly retorted by shooting all Frenchmen they took prisoners. Throughout the year 1810 this habit grew and as chiefs like Mina often made considerable captures, a series of most sanguinary reprisals took place. This barbarous method of conducting war was at its worst in 1811, but was put a stop to by mutual agreement in 1812.

In Catalonia Suchet after his retreat from Valencia laid siege to the strong fortress of Lerida. Having captured the city he drove the inhabitants, some 15,000 men, women and children, into the citadel and then opened fire upon them with artillery and killed them by hundreds. This was probably the worst example of savagery during the whole war. By June Suchet had once again cleared Aragon and waited the arrival of Macdonald, who had relieved Augereau in command of the VIIIth Corps, before he proceeded with the conquest of Valencia. Meanwhile Henry O'Donnell had organized a small army of 22,000 men in the Eastern Pyrenees whence he alike threatened Macdonald's advance on Barcelona and Suchet's movement on Tortosa. In December Suchet at last was able to lay siege to Tortosa which surrendered on 2 January 1811, a great blow to the Spanish cause.

Throughout the year 1810 things in Andalucia had remained much the same. At Cadiz the French finding it physically impossible to advance against the fortress across the marshy peninsula and its deep tidal channels, established some siege batteries on the Trocadero peninsula east of the town. This led to the British occupying the small ruined fort on the island of Matagorda.

On 22 April General Graham arrived from England and took over the command from William Stewart. He at once ordered the island to be abandoned since the small garrison suffered much from the French bombardment and it was thereupon occupied by the enemy who established on it their most advanced battery. The range across the harbour, some 4,000 yards, was however too great for both guns or mortars of those days and its abandonment proved to be no loss to us. So the blockade wore on, by May there were 8,000 British and Portuguese and some 18,000 Spanish troops in the Isla and the Regency planned to use the latter by assisting the risings in the sierras of Ronda and Granada, for England's command of the sea made it possible to land troops at almost any point. Although this power was

seldom used it is interesting to note how the French, possibly with memories of the landing at Mondego Bay in 1808, were always apprehensive of Wellington receiving reinforcements by this means. This was notably the case during Masséna's retreat in 1811.

Meanwhile Soult with the three Corps at his disposal, Victor's, Mortier's and Sebastiani's, some 70,000 strong, in addition to blockading Cadiz was holding all the towns as well as the open country of Andalusia, and from time to time sent one or another of his lieutenants on minor expeditions to crush any threatened rising or combination on the part of the Spaniards. At one time Sebastiani raided Murcia, Blake falling back before him. After plundering the city of Murcia, he heard of risings in the sierras he had traversed and retreated quickly on Granada. Then Mortier in September made an advance into Estremadura and got as far as Zafra, with the cavalry only thirty miles from Badajoz, a most unpleasant moment for Wellington, at the time fully engaged in striving to stem Masséna's advance into Portugal. Happily in these and in other cases Soult was unable to make any prolonged efforts or to effect any really threatening concentration without exposing his outlying forces to separate defeat. After Sebastiani had withdrawn from Murcia, Blake, apparently in quest of more trouble, with 1,000 horse and 8,000 infantry, alike ill-trained, pushed on to Cullar. Here Milhaud with his fine division of dragoons and Polish lancers, about 1,300 strong, suddenly fell on him and slew 500, besides taking a battery and 1,000 prisoners. His infantry which only numbered 2,000 were scarcely engaged at all. Small wonder is it that Wellington at this time placed little confidence in the value of Spanish co-operation.

Napoleon's orders to Soult at the end of October had been to push on the Vth (Mortier's) Corps from Seville and lend a hand to Masséna from the south bank of the Tagus opposite Lisbon, an impossible scheme to carry out owing to the ever-changing military situation. For it must be remembered that at this time even when the despatch-

riders got through safely, which was seldom, orders from Napoleon took a month to reach his lieutenants in southern Spain and hence they were as a rule two months and often more, out of date when they were received, since they were based on reports and dealt with situations already a month old when they reached Napoleon's hands.

Soult, finding that it was impossible to carry out the Emperor's belated plans for him to join hands with Masséna and force Wellington to re-embark, owing to the new dispositions of the Spanish army in Estremadura and of Wellington's detachments south of the Tagus, decided on a plan of his own and, collecting 20,000 men mostly from Mortier's Corps at Seville, he advanced at the end of December into Estremadura. To get this number he had to call upon Victor at Cadiz for help, he had also to draw in some detachments of the Vth Corps which were with difficulty holding the Spaniards in check. Soult now marched on Badajoz and on the way invested and captured Olivenza, an old and ill-fortified town, after which he invested Badajoz on the southern side. The Spanish leader, the Marqués de La Romana died on 23 January and the Spanish field army under Mendizabal who had succeeded him occupied the heights of San Cristobal on the northern bank of the Guadiana in rear of the river Gebora with 9,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry. Soult who had bridged the river up-stream passed over 4,500 infantry under Mortier, who was joined by 2,500 cavalry from Montijo. With this small force he attacked and decisively defeated Mendizabal on 19 February, the Spanish army being literally destroyed. Soult thereupon pressed the siege of Badajoz which surrendered on 10 March. His success was brilliant and complete for he had in less than two months completely defeated the Spanish army in Estremadura and captured 16,000 prisoners and two fortresses and this with only 20,000 men. But on 12 March he received news of Victor's severe defeat at Barrosa, so leaving Mortier with 11,000 men to hold Badajoz he started back for Seville with a division of infantry and some cavalry, arriving there on 20 March.

See
Map XXI
p. 312.

We will now see what had happened in Andalucia during Soult's absence. Things move slowly in Spain, and although Graham in Cadiz heard on 22 December that Soult had reduced Victor's force in front of Cadiz in order to strengthen his own for his Estremaduran expedition it was not till January 1811 that the Regency took action and proposed an attack on Victor's corps which now numbered only 19,000 men, and was largely composed of artillery and siege troops. The garrison of Cadiz now consisted of 20,000 Spanish troops under General La Peña and about 5,500 British and Portuguese under Graham. The plan eventually agreed upon by the Allies was to embark a force of about 4,000 British troops and 9,500 Spanish troops and to land them at Tarifa or some other convenient point whence they could march and attack Victor's besieging force in rear. If this could be done a little way inland, it would enable the troops left in garrison at Cadiz, aided by our Navy, to deal an effective blow on the siege batteries and their defenders. A weak Spanish brigade, about 1,500 strong, under General Béguines near Algeciras, was ordered to co-operate, and Lieutenant-General Sir C. Campbell, the Governor of Gibraltar, agreed to send 1,000 men from the Rock and from Tarifa, thus making the total force about 16,600.

La Peña claimed the command, and Graham, a most chivalrous gentleman, consented to serve under him, and with evil results, as we shall see. Graham's force embarked at Cadiz on 19 February, and sailed on the 21st, but the weather was so rough that it was found impossible to anchor at Tarifa, and the transports ran before a westerly gale to the Bay of Gibraltar anchoring off Algeciras on the evening of the 22nd. Here Graham found Campbell's promised reinforcement in the shape of six "flank" companies of the 9th, 28th, and 82nd Regiments under Lieutenant-Colonel Browne, about 500 strong. Graham's force landed on the 23rd and, after a bitter cold night in bivouac on the high ground south of the town, marched on the 24th to Tarifa, without

guns, ammunition, or any rations. In those days there was no real road¹ between Algeciras and the old Moorish fortress, which was held by a small British garrison. Here another small reinforcement was obtained, the 1st Battalion 28th Regiment, 460 strong, and on the following day, the 25th, Graham's guns and ammunition were brought round by the Navy to Tarifa. Graham's small force now numbered altogether 5,196 men, and he divided it into two brigades. The first of these, commanded by Major-General Dilkes, was about 2,000 strong, and consisted of the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Guards, a composite battalion consisting of two companies of the 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards and three companies of the 2nd Battalion 3rd Guards and the "flank battalion" from Gibraltar. With it were two companies of the 2nd Battalion of the 95th (Captain Cadoux's and Jenkins's) under Major Amos Norcott. The second brigade, under Brigadier-General Wheatley, was 2,700 strong and included the 1st Battalion 28th, 2nd Battalion 67th, and 2nd Battalion 87th. With it were the four companies of the 3rd Battalion of the 95th Rifles which, with two light companies of the 1st Battalion 47th Regiment and two light companies of the 20th Portuguese, were placed under Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Barnard of the 3rd Battalion 95th. The artillery under Major Duncan numbered ten guns, and for cavalry there were two squadrons of the 2nd Hussars K.G.L. 206 strong.

La Peña who had met with bad weather and had been compelled

¹The present metalled road was not completed until 1883. I often rode along the old mule-track during the years 1874-80 when with the 2nd Battalion at Gibraltar and since then have frequently visited this district. My house at Algeciras is built on the actual spot where Graham's force bivouacked on its way to Tarifa, and my home in the wilds at Tapatánilla is on the plain of La Janda, between Tarifa and Vejer on the road to Barrosa. Further I have surveyed and sketched most of the country in which the operations here described took place. Napier apparently never visited the district nor did Oman and many of the accounts given, alike of the routes followed and of the terrain of the battlefield, are at variance with the actual facts and conditions.

to put back did not leave Cadiz till the 26th, when the weather had moderated and he was able to land at Tarifa. His whole force was disembarked by the 27th and consisted of two divisions, with fourteen guns and four squadrons of cavalry under Colonel Whittingham, a British officer. The combined little army started on its march northward the following day.

North of Tarifa lies a plain about four miles in length and from one to two miles in width intersected by a small tidal river. The country east of this plain is mountainous and its northern end is closed by a detached mountain known as the Sierra Enmedio, on the northern slope of which lies the small village of Facinas. At the time of the march there was no regular road from Tarifa, but two tracks led northward on either side of the plain. The most ancient of these, unsuited for guns, skirted the eastern side crossing the spurs of the Enmedio about a mile and a half east of Facinas, and led direct to Casas Viejas and Medina Sidonia. The main track on Cadiz ran along the western side of the plain near the sea, crossing the river by a bridge, and at its north end turned inland and led over the col between the western spurs of the Enmedio and the Sierra Bartolomé at a point known as the Puerto de Facinas, about a mile west of that village. From Facinas the ground falls to the great plain of La Janda. This plain is some twelve miles in length and three to five broad, and is liable to winter floods, being often submerged for over half its surface to a depth of more than six feet¹ for months at a time, forming an extensive lake known as the Laguna de la Janda. In most years during the summer it dries off altogether, and during a dry winter there is often less than a foot of water over it. These explanations are necessary since any account of La Peña's and Graham's

¹ In a very wet winter some few years ago I sounded the depth of the laguna when in my shooting punt and found thirteen feet six inches of water. At the same spot at the same time in the following year it was only ankle-deep. In the first case the laguna covered over forty square miles; in the second, less than 1,000 acres.

march would otherwise be unintelligible to those who chanced to visit the district in ordinary weather, for it is unusual for the laguna to be of the dimensions it was in March 1811, save only for a few weeks in very wet seasons. A deep river, the Barbate, crosses its northern end and into this when in flood, the laguna overflows furiously. So far as is known, the allied force advanced from Tarifa along both these tracks, the Spaniards leading. Upon reaching the Puerto de Facinas, twelve miles from Tarifa, the force halted.¹ From Facinas two tracks led northward, one skirting the western shore of the laguna on Vejer, the other along the eastern shore joined the track from Tarifa on Casas Viejas. La Peña decided on the latter and, possibly deceived by the open and undulating nature of the ground for miles to his front, he ordered a night march. That he had reasons to conceal his advance is true, the western road led through a narrow defile to the bridge across the Barbate river below the steep cliffs of Vejer and thence direct on Chiclana and Cadiz, whereas the eastern track which led on Medina Sidonia was free from all serious military obstacles and threatened the French line of communication. Hence both strategically and tactically La Peña's choice was a sound one. It was his methods that failed.

La Peña formed an advance-guard of his cavalry and five battalions of infantry under General Lardizabel ; then came his main body of six

¹ Oman (vol. iv, p. 99), following other writers, says that the force halted at the "village of Bolonia" and the "bridge of Facinas." This is incorrect. The village of Bolonia lies on the shore of the Atlantic over four miles away and across the trackless Bartolomé sierra. There is no bridge within four miles of Facinas. Bolonia is incorrectly shown by Napier and also in some old Spanish maps ; the mistake possibly originated from somebody misreading an old map and taking the last letter of "Bolonia" to indicate the position of the village, in place of the first letter. In that of the "bridge of Facinas" (which Oman mentions on p. 101 as the Puente de Facinas) the mistake apparently comes from the abbreviated word "Pto." = Puerto = a pass having been misread as "Pte." = Puente = a bridge. Otherwise the whole account is alike unintelligible and impossible, for there was neither village nor bridge at the place described.

battalions under the Prince of Anglona. Graham's force formed the "reserve" and followed in rear. La Peña gave Graham two Spanish battalions, the Ciudad Real Regiment and Walloon Guards, in exchange for his two squadrons of Hussars of the K.G.L. The march began at 5 p.m.

Now although the country looks open and easy to traverse, it is not so. From the rocky sierras which dominate the eastern shores of the laguna run several mountain streams with steep banks and deep pools, one especially, which winds across the plain below Facinas and flows into the head of the laguna, being a considerable obstacle and only passable with difficulty by certain fords by day. Its condition by night may be imagined. On a low hill at the head of the laguna stands a large old farmhouse known as the Cortijo de las Habas and near this the Casas Viejas track bifurcates, the direct route used in summer being submerged at places in winter by arms of the laguna which compel the traveller to take to the higher ground past the *cortijo*. It is evident from Graham's diary that there was trouble at this spot for he describes how when near the farmhouse the guides "misled" them and a "countermarch" had to be made so as to regain the more eastern track. The upshot was that after an awful night's march made doubly miserable by a furious east wind (the detested "levanter") the British force only reached the north-east end of the laguna near the Celemin river by noon the next day (2 March). Nineteen hours in which to cover twelve miles! Even then they were still four miles from Casas Viejas. Meanwhile the advance-guard had reached Casas Viejas which was found to be occupied by two companies of French infantry sent from Medina Sidonia, twelve miles to the north-west. The Frenchmen shut themselves up in the strongly walled convent and La Peña was in no hurry to evict them but upon Graham arriving, the two light companies of the 1st Battalion 28th Regiment at once attacked the place and the

French made a bolt for it. Unluckily for them they were headed off by the German Hussars who killed or captured most of them. Meanwhile, Béguines's detachment, of some 1,600 men had arrived by the Alcala road and La Peña found his whole force complete. Prisoners reported a French brigade (Cassagne's) at Medina Sidonia. In spite of minor discomforts due to irresolute leading and to bad staff arrangements all seemed to be going well. It was good news to hear that Victor had pushed out a part of his force so far from Cadiz, and the chances of carrying out the whole programme of attacking the siege works in his absence seemed almost assured. But La Peña instead of pushing on to Medina Sidonia now suddenly decided to march direct on Vejer and ordered the advance to be resumed at 5 p.m. Graham however protested vigorously against a second night march so soon after the first one and La Peña postponed the advance to 11 p.m.

From Casas Viejas an excellent track runs along the low grass-grown hills bordering the northern bank of the Barbate and although when nearing Vejer it crosses some hollow ground which is sometimes flooded, this can be avoided by keeping along the higher ground to the north. Before the advance was resumed La Peña received reports that portions of this track were submerged and he thereupon decided to march on Vejer along the southern bank of the Barbate. Very probably also he did not relish the idea of making a flank march of ten or twelve miles with a very energetic and capable foe like Victor within striking distance on his right and with an impassable river (for the Barbate here is over twenty feet deep when in flood) close under his left flank. The route he decided upon was between the Barbate and the northern shores of the laguna. To gain this he had to recross the Barbate below Casas Viejas and also the Celemin stream two miles beyond, a most difficult operation by night. He accordingly listened to Graham's renewed protests and consented not to start until 6 a.m. the following day. It was however 8 a.m. on 3 March before

La Peña marched from Casas Viejas by the route described ; apparently the guides knew that under existing conditions the greatly swollen laguna would extend right up to the Barbate and so endeavoured to lead the column back by the route along which it had advanced from Facinas. In other words to march right round the south end of the laguna.

Most accounts, both those written at the time and subsequently, allude to the "treachery of the guides." This is sheer nonsense for under the prevailing conditions it was taking great risks for them to attempt to lead an army and its guns along the south bank of the Barbate. Whether they intended to march right round the laguna, a distance of some twenty miles in its then flooded condition, or whether the military leaders, seeing they were being led apparently straight back to Facinas, took alarm, it is hard to say. Anyway some time after crossing the Celemin, owing it is said to Graham's determination to take the shortest route, the Allied force made a wheel to the right and, after traversing the high plateau known as La Mesa for three miles, gained the narrow strip of unsubmerged ground along the south bank of the river. Progress was slow across the sodden plain and after covering two miles the force reached a point where their further advance was barred by a broad sheet of water. This was none other than the wide depression where the water from a brimming laguna overflows into the Barbate. This depression, which has a deep muddy channel running down its centre, is crossed by a rough stone causeway, much used by pack animals, since the ground on either side is churned deep by the herds of mares and cattle which pasture on the adjacent plain and marsh. When the head of the column reached this point, the causeway, which is some hundreds of yards in length, was completely submerged, and the east wind blowing dead on a lee shore straight across the laguna (here over five miles in width) had raised a "sea" which must have made the flood look most formidable. The

Spaniards who were in front began to feel their way across individually, some of their officers being carried on their men's backs.¹ Graham now came up and made arrangements for getting his guns across. He and his staff rode into the flood and soon located the submerged causeway which was three feet below the surface. He then posted men at intervals so as to mark out the ford, he remaining on his horse far out in the water, cheering on the men as they waded past him. The Rifles who were acting as escort to the guns "plunged in by sections as if on parade," the guns following behind them.² One gun unfortunately left the causeway and stuck, upon which Graham and his staff dismounted and helped to get it out. In his diary he writes "I set the example of going into the water, which was followed by Lacy, the Prince of Anglona and others. The passage lasted three hours and would have taken double that time but for the exertions made to force the men to keep the files connected."³ It is on record that the Spaniards seeing the Duke of Anglona wading in the laguna followed him with spirit. Once across the arm of the laguna the column struck across the hills to Vejer distant about five miles but did not reach it till midnight. The march had taken about sixteen hours or, deducting three hours occupied in crossing the submerged portion of the laguna, over thirteen hours. The total distance covered was not less than fifteen miles. The men were exhausted and of course wet through, and the bivouac on the heights of Vejer outside of the old town exposed to the bitter east wind was a miserably cold one. A squadron of French dragoons which had been occupying Vejer were driven out by the cavalry of the advance-guard. Throughout the day they had from their lofty look-out in Vejer watched the Allied army advancing laboriously across the flooded plain ; in fact from the moment it reached the

¹ *Colonel Stanhope's Journal* (Fortescue).

² Surtees, *Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade*, pp. 111, 112.

³ Oman, vol. iv, pp. 102, 103.

Mesa eight miles distant, probably about 10 a.m., it must have been in full view.

Turn now to the movements of the Spaniards holding the Isla. In accordance with the pre-arranged plan General Zayas, who had been left in command there, on the night of 2-3 March threw a bridge across the Santi Petri creek and constructed a tête-de-pont on the far side under cover of the guns of his own batteries. Victor who had received reports of the Allies being at Casas Viejas and at Vejer, on hearing of Zayas's movement which appeared to be a prelude to an attack on him from the Isla, decided to check it. Accordingly on the night of 3 March he ordered six companies of *voltigeurs* to storm the tête-de-pont. This they succeeded in doing, inflicting a loss of eighteen officers and some 300 men on the Spanish defenders. Zayas managed to save his bridge of boats and secured it to his own side of the tidal channel.

Victor's plan for meeting the advance of the Allies was simple and might have been effective. He placed one Division, General Villatte's, to bar the track leading along the shore from Conil to the Isla by which he expected the Allies might advance and the other two, General Ruffin's and General Leval's, in the woods near Chiclana whence they might take the Allies in flank should they come by the route he hoped they would. Villatte if attacked by Zayas was to withdraw across the creek near the mill. Victor's available force consisted of about 10,000 men only but he expected Cassagne with his 3,000 to rejoin him from Medina Sidonia. The Allies numbered roughly 5,000 British with under 10,000 Spanish troops and it is one of those curious points in military history that Victor believed them to be considerably over half as strong again, namely, 8,000 British and 18,000 Spanish, or a total of 26,000 and it is still more interesting to see how, in accordance with this preconceived idea, when the fight took place, although the British were greatly outnumbered, the French who fought them were convinced that an exactly opposite

condition of affairs prevailed. It is well to bear this in mind when following out the various phases of the battle.

La Peña left Vejer at 5 o'clock on the evening of the 4th and marched on Conil a small village on the Atlantic coast eight miles distant and once again indulged in one of his favourite night marches. The main track from Vejer to Chiclana runs two miles inland of Conil and from Conil there is another track to the Isla along the seashore which at places winds over the low sandy scrub-covered plain which abuts on the coast. It had been La Peña's intention to march via Conil but at daylight it was found that the Spanish advance-guard had missed the branch road on Conil and was marching on Chiclana. Graham however persuaded La Peña to incline to his left and thus regain the coast track and the Allied forces thereupon broke into a line of columns to the left and marching across the plain struck the track near the seashore about a mile south of the Barrosa ridge.

I will now describe the scene of the fight which is all the more necessary in that most of the popularly accepted ideas of "Barrosa Hill" differ widely from the actual topography of the ground. About midway between Conil and the Santi Petri creek a long low ridge which commences in a bluff promontory on the shores of the Atlantic runs inland in a north-easterly direction for about two miles, gradually descending until it merges in the plain which lies south of the tidal flats bordering the Bay of Cadiz. Its highest point is about 800 yards from the sea where it rises about 160 feet above high-water mark. Here there stood in 1811 a small house known as the *vigia* or "watch-house" or "look-out" of Barrosa¹ whose foundations still exist; this is referred to in some contemporary accounts of the fight as "a small chapel." On the promontory, about

See
Map XVIII,
p. 214.

¹ The name Barrosa is derived from *barro* = mud, *barroso-a*, "muddy" also "reddish." The latter would apply to the colour of the sandy promontory. The English spelling often met with of "Barossa" is of course incorrect.

100 feet below the watch-house on a spur overhanging the strand is one of the well-known watch-towers which are to be seen at intervals all along the coast of Spain ; this one is known as the Torre de La Barrosa. Three miles north of it close to the Santi Petri creek there is another, known as the Torre Bermeja.¹ The ridge of Barrosa from the Vigia for about 500 yards inland is practically level, with easy slopes on its northern and southern sides. At its eastern end the slopes are very gentle until it gradually merges into the plain. Only about the Vigia are there any slopes which can be called "steep" and these only for very short distances. The ridge is known to the country folk as the "Cerro del Puerco" the "pig's hill" or the "hog's back" from the fancied resemblance, as seen from the north, to the profile of a recumbent pig lying with its snout pointing seaward. Between the Cerro and the Santi Petri there are several dry watercourses, cut by the heavy rains, with vertical sides two to six feet in height ; save for these the whole country is fairly level and undulating and overgrown with low scrub sprinkled with fir trees. A thick pine forest covers all the hill-sides south and west of Chiclana, this forest at the time of the battle extending far beyond its present limits reaching close up to the Cerro itself and effectually concealing all movements of troops. The northern portion of the plain is bounded by the Almanza creek and the Santi Petri Creek and its branches.

Soon after daylight on the 5th the Spanish cavalry reported that a French force was in position on the wooded hill by the Torre Bermeja and La Peña decided to dislodge it and marched with his force to do so, leaving Graham to act as rear-guard. About 9 a.m. Graham occupied the ridge of Barrosa and sent the two squadrons of Hussars of the K.G.L. to watch the approaches from Chiclana. At about the same time La Peña's advance-guard under Lardizabal attacked Villatte

¹ *bermejo-a* = of a bright reddish colour.

but was driven back. The attack was renewed with some of Anglona's division and whilst it was in progress Villatte found himself threatened in rear by Zayas who had thrown afresh his bridge of boats and passed troops across the Santi Petri. Villatte quickly realized the danger of his position and withdrew across the Almanza creek taking up a defensive position near the mill. The fight had been short and sharp, the French and Spaniards having each lost between 300 to 350 men. And now came the moment when La Peña's incapacity as a leader was painfully evident. Not content with preventing Lardizabal from pushing on against Villatte, he decided now that he had cleared the way to the Isla to march thither and thus practically to abandon all the advantages the Allies had gained by their arduous expedition. So he sent Graham orders to retire from the Barrosa ridge which was to be held by a small rear-guard consisting of three battalions of Anglona's division under Béguines and two Spanish regiments under Cruz Murgeon. With these was left the battalion of "flank" companies under Browne. On the grassy plateau near the Torre de La Barrosa were five squadrons of Spanish cavalry under Major-General Whittingham. This rear-guard was to hold the ridge until Graham's troops had reached a defensible position close to the Torre Bermeja, when it was to be withdrawn.

Graham had all along realized that the ridge of Barrosa should be held by the Allies since in his opinion it was "the key to the Santi Petri" and he had urged La Peña to hold it. However on receiving orders to quit it he marched down the gentle declivity leading from the crest and following the track taken by La Peña's guns entered the pine forest. Wheatley's Brigade was in front followed by Dilkes's, then came the British guns with the rear-guard composed of the Companies of the 2nd Battalion 95th Rifles under Major Amos Norcott. The track was narrow but good, the men moved in column of route yet so dense were the fir trees that all view was cut off and the guns' teams and mounted

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officers had some difficulty in avoiding the lower branches. It was now a little after noon and the patrols of German Hussars which Graham had sent out reported that the French were in strength in the woods to the north-east. This was Victor's force of 7,000 infantry, 400 cavalry and twelve guns which was advancing rapidly from the direction of Chiclana in two columns. The first of these, Ruffin's Division 2,800 strong with six guns on reaching the Laguna del Puerco, a shallow pool on the plain, inclined to its right and made straight for the highest part of the ridge where stood the Vigia. The second column, Leval's Division over 4,000 strong with six guns, moved direct on the eastern end of the ridge. The two divisions were about a mile apart and two squadrons of dragoons, reported at first as a third column, moved on their outer or southern flank. At this critical moment the infantry of La Peña's rear-guard, as we have seen, was halted near the Torre de La Barrosa with the cavalry near the foreshore a little north of it. The reserve ammunition and baggage were still on the plateau below the Vigia, the men lying about resting after their prolonged night march. About this time the French dragoons who had galloped round the southern slopes of the Cerro caused a panic among the scattered troops with the baggage, but Whittingham advancing with his horsemen and some infantry drove them back but seeing the near approach of the French, after covering the retreat of the baggage, he decided to withdraw from Barrosa ridge and guard the track along the shore. Browne protested but the Spanish battalions all streamed down the northern slopes of the hill and left him. Browne finding himself left alone on the ridge with Ruffin's Division closing on him rapidly was about to withdraw when he was threatened by the French dragoons; they were however driven back by an opportune charge of a squadron of the Hussars of the K.G.L. and Browne descending the hillside marched after Graham. Soon after this the French 9th *Léger* which had followed the dragoons in their advance with wonderful quickness tried to push past the Torre

de La Barrosa but were threatened by the Spanish cavalry and infantry and eventually withdrew.

It was shortly before this that a sergeant of the German Hussars came galloping along the track through the pine forest and overtaking Norcott, who with his rear-guard of Riflemen had marched about half-a-mile into the wood, asked for the British General, saying that the French were in great force on the right and were pushing on to seize the Barrosa ridge in rear. Norcott directed the sergeant to the head of the column and turning his men to the right-about, extended them over a front of about 600 yards and advanced through the fir trees towards the French. When Graham received word that the French were in force on his right and rear he was at the head of his main body considerably over a mile and a half from the outskirts of the pine woods. He at once gave the order "Right about face! Form as you can," and, galloping back, on reaching the open ground at the edge of the wood he saw Ruffin's Division rapidly ascending the high ground in front of him hardly a mile distant, whilst to his right front he could see the Spanish infantry retiring in haste below the ridge. He also saw Leval's Division standing on the outskirts of the wood on the plain to his left "within cannon-shot." The situation was truly desperate. Graham's conduct when thus so suddenly taken at a disadvantage was splendid. Napier has well described him as "a daring old man with a ready temper for battle." And such indeed he proved to be on this day, for upon being asked what he intended to do he replied laconically "Fight!" He now sent word to Wheatley's Brigade (which had been leading) to countermarch and move in what was a south-easterly direction so as to check Leval's column whilst Dilkes's Brigade countermarched and moved direct against Ruffin on the ridge to the south. Such was Graham's rough-and-ready plan to meet the enemy, which practically meant two separate attacks delivered simultaneously on the two French

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divisions over a mile apart. Owing to the attempted countermarch in the dense pine wood and the narrowness of the track there was some little confusion among the various units and some of the rear companies of Wheatley's rear regiment, the 67th, in place of moving with their own Brigade, countermarched and followed Dilkes's out of the wood. As a set-off to this, two companies of the Coldstream Guards which Dilkes had detached to protect Duncan's guns when the Rifles had been sent out skirmishing, finding that Graham had already provided an escort of the two companies of the 47th for them, joined Wheatley's Brigade. Wheatley when he received orders to countermarch at once sent the 3rd Battalion of the 95th under Barnard with the two companies of the 20th Portuguese to gain the edge of the wood to the south-east and attack, so as to delay Leval's advance until his own Brigade could get clear of the forest and deploy.

When Graham reached the edge of the wood the only formed troops near him was Browne's "flank" Battalion which had just withdrawn from the hill. Graham ordered Browne to face about and attack at once and according to one of his officers, upon seeing Browne about to extend his men told him to form them into a compact battalion saying: "I must show something more serious than skirmishing."¹ The "flank" Battalion accordingly crossed the ravine high up where it gives but little cover and attempted to advance straight up the northern slope of the Cerro. As it approached Ruffin's force it was met by a heavy fire, both of grape-shot and musketry, and over a third of the officers and some 200 men went down. Although the remainder attempted to press on and close with the bayonet, more were swept away by each successive discharge and the survivors broke and took such shelter as the shallow watercourses and broken banks, combined with the scrub and a few small scattered pines, afforded.

¹ Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, p. 187.

It was a most gallant but impossible attempt, but was justified in its results in so far as it gained time for Dilkes's Brigade to extricate itself from the wood and get into some sort of formation for attack.

The first British troops to emerge from the wood were the two Companies of the 2nd Battalion of the 95th. Norcott had, as we have seen, very wisely extended his men as he advanced, and in consequence they came out in a good skirmishing line. Seeing the French in three columns with some cavalry on their left flank he at once inclined to his right so as to put his flank on the low sandhills near the shore and thus secure it and at the same time to cover the deployment of the main body which now came into sight behind him. To do this he had to cross a deep ravine with sides steep cut by the torrential rains into which several smaller ravines of a similar nature lead down from the valleys above. Upon gaining the broken ground he "refused" his centre and pushed forward his line of skirmishers on either flank. In consequence, as the French *voltigeurs* covering the French deployment advanced down the slope they came under a hot fire from our Riflemen from front and flanks and were held up.¹

As soon as Dilkes's Brigade disentangled itself from the wood it deployed into an irregular line with great rapidity. The detachment of the 67th was the first to form up and it inclined to the right with the 1st and 3rd Guards on its left and the remains of Browne's "flank" Battalion still further to the left and somewhat detached. Norcott now disposed his Riflemen on the flanks of the 67th and the Brigade of Guards. Ruffin had meantime got his guns into action on the knoll 300 yards north-east of the Vigia and as the British fighting line advanced from the wood they were heavily cannonaded. Dilkes's

¹ Norcott thus described his advance to his son (Major-General W. S. R. Norcott), from whose son (Colonel C. H. B. Norcott) I obtained a copy of the account. The course followed by these companies is well shown on Graham's original map of the action.

Brigade as it advanced took ground to the right where the deeply-cut dry watercourses and steep broken banks to some extent gave protection from the fire of the French artillery and, owing to these and to the slopes of the hill sides, it did not at first come under any heavy musketry fire. As the British approached the crest, they came under a furious fire from the two battalions of the 24th *Ligne* which, formed in two columns, with their drums beating, now left the high ground and charged down on our line. They were met, however, by a deadly fire, more especially from the 1st Guards which they immediately fronted. Victor who was on the hill-top close behind now called up two battalions of *grénadiers réunis* under General Rousseau and led them forward, waving his white-plumed hat. These columns struck our line to the right of where the first columns had aimed and in front of the 3rd Guards and 67th. Once again they were received by a heavy fire from the British line, which by this time had almost assumed the form of a semicircle, owing to Norcott's Riflemen and the 67th with the remains of Browne's Battalion having pressed forward on the flanks. After a furious interchange of fire at only a few yards distance the superiority of the British fire in line to that of the columns once more asserted itself but not before several hundreds of the gallant Frenchmen had fallen, including Generals Ruffin and Rousseau, as well as very many of our men. In vain did Victor try to re-establish the fight by bringing up the remaining two battalions of Ruffin's Division, the 1st of the 96th and according to some accounts, the 9th *Léger*; the British ever pressing onward and keeping up a heavy fire made it hopeless and the whole force recoiled up hill and over the brow, leaving a gun and a howitzer and 107 unwounded prisoners in our possession. The fighting had been extraordinarily severe, and, short as was the action, the losses were far above the average. On the British side 25 officers and 588 men had been killed or wounded, and this out of a total of 76 officers and 1,873 men, an average of about one in three. The French who

numbered 108 officers and about 3,000 men lost 36 officers and 840 men, a slightly less percentage but heavy enough.¹

So much for the right attack. We must now see how the fight had meanwhile progressed on the left. Duncan's ten guns upon emerging from the wood came into action against Leval's advancing force distant at first, at probably about 1,400 to 1,500 yards. From this point Duncan could not see Ruffin's troops or his artillery, a long low spur on his right flank shutting off all view of the high ground near the Vigia. Leval now deployed his infantry, forming a line of four battalion columns of double-companies with two battalions in second line. His artillery (six guns) which had been moving on his reverse flank at the same time trotted forward and came into action on the ridge at a point about a mile north-east of the Vigia and about 1,300 yards from Duncan's battery. Meanwhile, Barnard with the 3rd Battalion of the 95th had pushed forward his line of skirmishers with great energy and daring—"vehemently" is the description of his advance given by Napier—and brought a most biting fire to bear on Leval's battalions as they were in the act of deploying into line of battalion columns. The 20th Portuguese acted as a support on Barnard's right rear and suffered heavily. At this moment, a false alarm that the cavalry of the Allies was about to attack caused two of the French battalions to form squares, in which formation they gave a splendid target for our Riflemen and suffered considerably. Duncan's guns also got in some very effective rounds of shrapnel shell. When Wheatley's Brigade gained the edge of the wood and were about to emerge, there was a wrangle between the Guards and the 87th as to who should "lead out." It is said that during the delay at forming the

¹ Oman, vol. iv, pp. 116, 117, who as usual has worked out the above figures with great care, noted that the British casualties were 10 in every 31 of those present whereas the French were 10 in every 35.

line, whatever may have been the cause, the 87th lost four officers and over fifty men from the fire of the French battery !

Leval's line when formed consisted of two battalions of the 54th *Ligne* on his right with two of the 8th *Ligne* on the left, a battalion of *grénadiers réunis* and the 45th *Ligne* being in second line in reserve. Each battalion was formed in column of double-companies giving a front of about seventy men in nine ranks. The French advance is described as having been most imposing, and there was a brave show of plumes and much martial music. "The fire of their invisible foes (the Rifles) must however have proved very deadly as it served to arrest their march and caused them to open a desultory fire along their whole line in return."¹ The firing was mostly independent, one battalion only, the 2nd of the 8th in the left centre, firing volleys. This battalion gradually forged ahead of the rest and its fire as well as that of the 54th was so severe that Barnard with his Riflemen and the two Portuguese companies were compelled to fall back for over 700 yards, inflicting very heavy losses as they did so on the dense line of columns in front of them ; they reformed in rear of Graham's line which was now advancing to attack the foe. The British line consisted of the detachment of the 67th on the right, then came the 2nd Battalion 87th and Coldstream companies with the 28th on the left. An officer of the 28th says, "We had formed line under cover of the 95th and advanced to meet their right wing which was coming down in close columns—a great advantage."² As the infantry thus advanced Duncan's guns pressed forward to a second position about 600 yards in advance of the first and opened with shrapnel shell and grape shot with destructive effect.

The spot where the battle was joined in this part of the field,

¹ Bunbury, *Reminiscences of a Veteran*, p. 75.

² C. Cadell, *Narrative of the Campaigns of the 28th Regiment*.

unlike the western end of the Barrosa ridge where there are some well defined spurs and slopes, is practically a level plain measuring about 1,000 yards across, with slopes on three sides of the very gentlest description.

The British and French lines now closed. The 2nd battalion of the 8th *Ligne* which had, as we have seen, got in advance of the other battalions, exchanged a volley with the 87th at close range, Major Hugh Gough¹ their Commander, says at thirty-five yards although the French say sixty. The results were as usual, the fire of the British deployed line overwhelmed that of the double-company column and the Frenchmen, heavily smitten, were thrown into disorder and fell back on their 1st battalion. Graham, whose horse had been shot, was leading on foot in front of the Coldstream companies. Some of the Guards opened fire, but Graham striking up their muskets, shouted to them to "Cease fire and charge" and charge the whole line did with a tremendous cheer. Eye-witnesses describe that when the gallant Gough called on the 87th to charge they did so with "the most unearthly howl!" The French broke and the British got amongst them. Gough in his account of the fight says that he rode among the fugitives and had not the heart to kill them. It was in this charge that the 87th captured the French Eagle of the 1st battalion of the 8th *Ligne*. Leval now brought up the 45th *Ligne* but Gough reformed a portion of his regiment and advanced firing. When within fifty yards the 45th although some 700 strong, apparently demoralized by the heavy fire and the confusion which reigned, for they were being outflanked and pressed by the 67th on their left, broke and fled back into the wood. During this time the 28th attacked the 2nd battalion of the 54th *Ligne* as they were deploying, and after three attempts, charged and they also broke and fell back. The 1st battalion of the 54th which had been sent by Leval through the wood

¹ Afterwards Field-Marshal Viscount Gough.

to his right to endeavour to turn Graham's right was effectively held back by Barnard's Riflemen who mustered strongly on the left flank. Leval had now only one battalion left intact, the *grénadiers réunis*. This covered the withdrawal of the broken 8th and 45th and he succeeded in reforming his line a little north of the laguna del Puerco.¹

During this desperate struggle Duncan had pushed his guns forward to a third position on a knoll on the summit of the Barrosa ridge whence he could sweep with his fire the gently sloping ground across which Leval had fallen back. Wheatley's Brigade re-formed with its right in advance of the guns in the same order as before and at about the same time Dilkes's Brigade having wheeled to the left and reformed after driving Ruffin's men from the highest part of the Cerro, came up on the right of Duncan's guns, also in the same order as before, and Graham for the first time on this day found his whole force formed in some sort of battle order on a front of about a mile, facing east.

Victor was meanwhile attempting to rally his two shattered divisions north of the laguna with his dragoons on either flank but Graham gave him no respite and pushed forward. Both Barnard's and Norcott's Riflemen were once more extended, Wheatley's Brigade advancing in the same order as before whilst Dilkes's Brigade in spite of "a severely destructive fire" from Ruffin's remaining guns and infantry, pressed forward vigorously along the ridge, bringing up their right, the 67th, under Major Hon. E. Acheson, making for the enemy's guns. About this time the French cavalry threatened Dilkes's right flank, so much so, that the Guards were about to form square. Whittingham who hitherto had done useful work appears to have had his attention directed to another part of the field and so missed a great opportunity but fortunately at this moment a squadron of the Hussars of the

¹ Bunbury, *Reminiscences of a Veteran*, p. 87.

K.G.L. made a sudden and furious charge on the French dragoons near the laguna and overthrew them ; riding on they got among the artillery and infantry, assisting in the capture of two more guns. There can be no doubt but that the French were at this time thoroughly shaken ; they were firm in the belief that they were greatly outnumbered, the scattered fir trees having concealed the small numbers of the British and prevented them from seeing that there was no second line or reserve to Graham's force. Whatever the cause they now suddenly gave way and made off in a disordered mass for Chiclana leaving two more guns in the hands of the victorious British troops.¹

Most unfortunately Graham's gallant little army was unable to follow up its brilliant success. The Spanish cavalry under Whittingham arrived on the scene too late to be of any use. Two Spanish guns came up on the right of Graham's line and fired some long shots at Victor's retreating men. The two Spanish battalions placed at Graham's disposal, although most keen to share in the fight, were not brought up until too late.

Throughout the whole course of the fight La Peña, in spite of Graham's repeated requests for assistance, refused to move. It is one of the most pitiable stories of the incapacity of the Spanish leaders in the whole Peninsular War. On hearing of Victor's advance from Chiclana La Peña drew up his whole force near the Torre Bermeja across the isthmus facing south. Soon he got news of Graham's daring attack, but he still declined to help, since he was convinced the British would be beaten ! His lieutenant, Zayas, who had driven Villatte across the creek, besought him in vain for leave to march and join Wheatley. Nor would La Peña believe that Graham had won the fight until he saw some of the discomfited French stream-

¹ *Well. Supp. Desp.* vii, pp. 126-133.

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ing northward through the wood, and even then he declined to move on the grounds that his men were tired and that "enough had been done for one day !"

After the fight Graham's force bivouacked in the fir woods near the Almanza creek, leaving the 3rd Battalion of the Rifles to hold the Cerro del Puerco so as to protect the wounded and also give notice should any party of the French attempt to return. None, however, appeared, and after dark Major Ross, who had succeeded to the command on Barnard's being wounded, moved the Battalion across the field of battle, thickly strewn with the dead and wounded of both forces, and formed it into a square on a knoll amid the sandhills west of the big ravine near the foreshore. Here the Riflemen bivouacked. Sir William Cope, who knew many actors in the scene, remarks on the very severe work which this young Battalion—it was less than two years since it had been raised—had been called upon to perform on this day : namely, a sixteen hours' night march, three hours of manœuvring and hard fighting, followed by a bivouac, all this without any food.

In the successful attack on the Cerro, Dilkes's Brigade captured General Rousseau ; he was very badly wounded, and was left in charge of the 3rd Battalion. He died at midnight and was buried by our Riflemen on the sandy foreshore of the Atlantic. In his pocket was found a leave of absence for him to return to France on account of ill-health, which his appearance clearly indicated, but of which this brave soldier had not availed himself.¹ A pathetic story has been handed down that Rousseau's favourite poodle remained with his wounded master until he died and that after we buried him, the dog refused to leave the grave and tried to dig him up !

The following morning, the Riflemen were ordered to fall back on the Isla, Graham having decided to return thither in consequence

¹ Surtees, *Twenty-five years in the Rifle Brigade*, p. 124.

of La Peña's incapacity. On his arrival there he gave the Spanish authorities notice that he withdrew his consent to serve under La Peña. Wellington wrote to him expressing his entire approval of this.

In various accounts of the fight at Barrosa men who took part in it describe it as one of the most desperate affairs in which they had ever been engaged. Surtees who was with the 3rd Battalion Companies with Wheatley's Brigade in the left attack writes, "In all my fighting, I never saw an action in which the chances of death were so numerous as in this," and Ruffin who witnessed the attack of Dilkes's Brigade told our officers that he had never seen men fall so fast as did the British soldiers as they advanced up the slopes and that he expected that they would break and turn. A high compliment from such an experienced soldier! Wellington described it as "the hardest action that has been fought yet."¹

The losses in this hard-fought action as may be imagined were very severe. Graham lost seven officers and 195 other ranks killed, and fifty-one officers and 986 men wounded, his total casualties being 1,238 out of the 5,217 who went into action. The losses of the French were even heavier, being twenty-four officers and 220 men killed and fifty-four officers and 1,630 men wounded. Ten officers and 124 men were "missing," a total of 2,062 casualties out of 7,170 officers and men.²

The two Companies of the 2nd Battalion of the Rifles had six men killed and Lieutenants John Charles Hope and Thomas Cochrane, a sergeant, one bugler and twenty-six wounded, whilst the five Companies of the 3rd Battalion had one officer, Captain Knipe, and nineteen men killed, and three officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Barnard, Lieutenants

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Beresford 25 March, 1811.

² Oman, vol. iv, Appendix v, p. 613.

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William Campbell and Tarleton Hovenden, three sergeants and forty-five men wounded.

The trophies of the fight were the Eagle of the 8th *Ligne* captured by the 87th (this was the first Eagle which fell into British hands), four guns and two howitzers. Two general officers, Ruffin and Rousseau (both mortally wounded), eighteen officers and about 150 rank and file were taken prisoners. Graham in his despatches mentions how "Lieutenant-Colonel Barnard (twice wounded) and the officers of his flank Battalion executed the duty of skirmishing in advance in a masterly manner," and also recommended Lieutenant-Colonel Norcott for promotion."¹

Wellington was greatly pleased with Graham for his conduct in the fight, and wrote on 25 March: "I concur in the propriety of your withdrawing to the Isla on the 6th, as much as I admire the promptitude and determination of your attack on the 5th; and I most sincerely congratulate you and the brave troops under your command on your success."²

La Peña, not content with having frustrated the whole object of the expedition by his incapacity, in his despatch not only took all the credit of the victory but blamed Graham for having spoilt it by returning to Cadiz! Later, when the Regency granted La Peña a Grand Cross, and offered to make Graham a Grandee of Spain, he curtly declined to be honoured in such company!

Seldom is it possible to follow out the movements or any particular battalion in a general action, but Barrosa is an exception, and it is easy to visualize the scene where the various Companies of the 95th Rifles extended and fought so well. The actual fight lasted less than an hour and a half. Colonel Andrew Barnard was severely wounded in the middle of the action and was carried to the rear, and whilst his

¹ *Well. Desp.* Graham to Liverpool, 6 March 1811.

² *Well. Desp.* To Graham, 25 March 1811.

wound was being dressed he was wounded a second time, still more severely. Of the four mounted officers with the 3rd Battalion, two had their horses killed and one had his wounded. Surtees, who was sent to bring up ammunition, describes how the whole ground was ploughed up by the enemy's round shot.¹

It has been often said that owing to the lamentable inaction of La Peña all the advantages of the victory of Barrosa were lost, and no doubt strategically its only result was to cause Soult to hasten back from his Estramaduran adventure with a portion of his force, leaving Mortier at Badajoz too weak to attempt any diversion in favour of Masséna. It was however an inspiring and inspiriting fight for Englishmen, for it taught them that in the attack the British formation in line was able to overthrow Napoleon's redoubtable battalion-columns. Wellington's actions from Vimeiro onwards had shown how the greater volume of fire of the British two-deep line used in the defence invariably overwhelmed that of the French double-company column, but Barrosa demonstrated that it was equally deadly *in the attack*. From a Regimental point of view the fight was even more gratifying, for never was the value of well-trained light infantry armed with rifles more clearly demonstrated. It was doubly fortunate that on this day our Riflemen were in the hands of such intrepid and experienced officers as Barnard and Norcott and that owing to Graham's soldier-like appreciation of their proper use they were employed in a manner which enabled full advantage to be taken of their armament and training.

¹ The French on this day were firing 6-in. shells from their howitzers. I picked up some fragments of shells at Duncan's "2nd position" in 1911. They were identified as being of 6-inch calibre.

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NOTE ON THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE BATTLEFIELD OF BARROSA.

I must call attention to a very curious error regarding the topography of the battlefield of Barrosa which has obtained wide credence. How it originated it is hard to say, possibly Graham's allusion to "the heights" of Barrosa in his despatch gave an idea that the British force stormed a lofty hill. This is the more curious since Napier most accurately describes the Cerro del Puerco as "a long low ridge extending about a mile and a half inland." Many who read this and who know the neighbourhood of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst will recall the sandy plateau east of that place known as "Barrosa Common"; this locality no doubt was thus named by some officer who had been present at the fight and who saw in the sandy hills, heather and scattered fir trees, some resemblance to the field of battle. But these Surrey hills have slopes infinitely steeper than those near Barrosa. Anyway a popular belief arose that "Barrosa Hill" was an imposing military position and various writers alluded to it as such.

In July 1910, in the *Journal of the Royal Artillery* there appeared a lecture by Professor Oman illustrated by a map of the battlefield showing the Vigia to be on the apex of a steep conical hill detached from other hill features and rising to a height of from 280 to 320 feet, the plain below it being shown as only 40 feet above the sea. The contours are marked at 40 feet vertical intervals and there are at least seven of them, or eight, counting the top one shown around the Vigia. Now the Barrosa ridge is no such detached hill but, as I have described, rises almost imperceptibly from a plateau about 80 feet above the sea a mile and a-half inland to its highest point of 160 feet half-a-mile from the foreshore.

This remarkable map is reproduced in Oman's fourth volume of his *Peninsular War* published in 1911, with the exception that the contours are not numbered and that the highest one, the knoll at the Vigia, is omitted, thus reducing the height of the hill to something over 280 feet. In January, 1912, Mr. Oman wrote to the *Saturday Review* and explained that he had never visited the battlefield but that he had taken his map from a Spanish map published in 1890. But this map must be extraordinarily incorrect, for not only are the altitudes shown on it hopelessly wrong but also the distances. Thus the Torre de La Barrosa is shown as being only 3,600 yards from the Torre Bermeja, a little over two miles, whereas the actual distance between the two is over 6,000 yards or nearly three-and-a-half miles.

How completely Oman was misled by this luckless Spanish map is proved by his description of the fight where he lays stress on the Guards

BARROSA

BARROSA

and the wing of the 67th having "climbed a steep 200-foot slope under fire," adding that they were "blown by their climb."¹

That the men were exhausted by their previous night's march and by the rapidity with which they had moved to the attack is unquestionable, but a reference to the sketch-map in this volume will show that there is no 200-foot hill to climb. As will be seen by the contours the average slopes on the hillside where the British right attack was pressed do not exceed 3° or 4° or a gradient of between 1 in 20 and 1 in 15, the very steepest part being only about 1 in 10, and that only for a few yards. It must also be remembered that the French came *down* from the ridge or rather, the plateau which here has no defined crest and met our men on the gently sloping hillside below.²

The farthest position reached by the French before they broke and fell back would seem to have been about 300 yards in advance of the ridge. Here on 5 March 1911 I found several skulls and many bones recently ploughed up, also several buttons of the French 24th *Ligne*. The slaughter at this point was great.

The sketch-map given in this volume is based, so far as regards all distances and detail, on the recent large-scale Spanish survey on a scale of 1 : 25,000, known as the "*Hojas por terminos municipales*," prepared in Madrid by the *Diréccion general del Instituto Geográfico y Estadístico*. The heights above the sea were taken by a skilled surveyor with theodolite and chain and the contours and minor details were sketched in by me on the ground in 1911 and 1912.

A word as to the correct spelling of the word Barrosa. I have already given its derivation. Possibly some critic may notice that on the Rifle Brigade Badge on the cover of the *Chronicle* for some twenty years and also that, on the cover of Part I of this History it is spelt "Barossa." The reason for this is that the blocks used by the binders were facsimiles of the badge actually worn at various times by the Regiment. The badge on the hideous helmet (1884-1889) is a case in point. Of course it would have been a simple matter to alter the spelling, but inasmuch as there are some five or six other Peninsular "Honours" incorrectly spelt, I decided to leave the matter alone.

¹ Oman, vol. iv, p. 115.

² In the *Saturday Review* of 22 April 1911, I contributed an article describing a visit to the field of Barrosa on the Centenary of the fight (5 March 1911). This is reprinted in the *Rifle Brigade Chronicle* for 1911, in which also are photographs of the ridge of Barrosa which are of themselves evidence of the gentle nature of the slopes.

CHAPTER XI.

MASSÉNA'S RETREAT, 1811.

Wellington's anxieties and Masséna's predicament—Life at Vallé—The Black Brunswickers and the Regimental dog—Junot withdraws from Santarem—The Light Division follows in pursuit—Terrible devastation wrought by French—Masséna's Army in full retreat—Affair at Paialvo—Skirmish at Leiria—Riflemen mounted behind Royal Dragoons—Erskine succeeds Craufurd in command of the Light Division—The Fight at Pombal—Affair at Condeixa—The Combat of Redinha—Wellington's praise of the Rifles—Outpost courtesies—Masséna abandons the Coimbra road—Fight at Casal Novo—"A steady sturdy old Rifleman"—A long running fight—Death of Major John Stewart—Marbot's combat with "a Rifle officer"—Fight at Foz d' Arouce—Shortage of rations—Masséna abandons his transport—Wellington's commendation of the Light Division's work—A question of Military Education—Kincaid's views—Losses of the Light Division—and other Divisions—Celorico occupied—Pursuit of Masséna up the Alva valley, Masséna's flank move on Guarda—Affair at Freixeda—Death of the Adjutant, Lieutenant James Stewart—The Light Division and Cavalry move on Guarda—Loison retires on Sabugal—The Action of Sabugal—The Light Division crosses the river alone—A fight in a fog—Beckwith's Brigade heavily engaged—Drummond's Brigade arrives—Picton's Division crosses the river—Withdrawal of French—Beckwith's fine conduct in the fight—"Old Trousers"—Wellington's praise of Beckwith's Brigade—Masséna retreats into Spain—The Light Division takes up its old outpost line on the Agueda.

See Map
"Lisbon to
Salamanca"
at end of
volume.

IN the early part of the year 1811 Wellington had many anxieties. To begin with the sudden death of the Marqués de La Romana on 23 January deprived him of the one Spanish leader in whom he had confidence. Following close on this came Mendizabal's defeat on the Gebora and Soult's investment of Badajoz. These events made him doubly anxious lest the French should attempt to advance south of the Tagus on Lisbon. Added to these troubles due to the enemy's movements were those in connection with the maintenance of his own army. The

drafts and reinforcements he urgently needed were long in coming out from England and there was a serious lack of specie with which to pay his troops and to purchase supplies. Then there were his troubles with the Portuguese whose irregular and procrastinating habits were a constant trial. Meanwhile his plan to starve out the enemy although it took some two months longer than he had reckoned upon, was slowly but surely progressing and in February Masséna's position had become so desperate that he was compelled to fall back northward on the valley of the Mondego. Wellington at this time was planning an attack on Junot on the Rio Mayor so as to create a diversion in favour of Badajoz. Meanwhile Masséna showing a bold front with three of his divisions on the Rio Mayor, skilfully withdrew the remaining five northward and by the first week in March was ready to commence his retreat.

Turning now to the fortunes of the Light Division. Throughout January and February 1811 the 1st Battalion remained in their cantonments along the Rio Mayor about Vallé. On 23 January there is a grim entry in several of the journals kept by officers, recording a parade of the Light Division to witness the shooting of three of the Brunswick Oël's Corps for attempted desertion. Others were sentenced to transportation and in consequence of the continuous desertion the Corps was sent to the rear. Our Riflemen cordially hated the "Black Brunswickers" ("Death or Glory Boys" as they called them owing to the skull and cross-bones they wore on their appointments) not so much for their treachery as for their reputed habit of eating dogs! It chanced at this time that there was a "regimental dog" belonging to the 95th named "Rifle." He was devoted to the green-jackets and it was a standing joke among the men that he had a great antipathy to a red coat. He had survived many skirmishes during which he used to run about and bark and show every symptom of enjoying himself, but finally he was captured and *eaten* by the voracious Brunswickers. It is said that our men in

consequence viewed with equanimity the fate of the deserters and that the departure of the Corps from the Light Division was a matter of great satisfaction.

The German Hussars were ever on the alert and on 9 February Cornet Streunitz surprised a French post of an officer and thirty men and on 22 February repeated the process and captured a party of fifteen Frenchmen who had been placed in ambush with the object of surprising one of our cavalry piquets, a case of the biter bit.

Desertions from Masséna's army were at this time very numerous and on 4 March two men came in and reported to the Riflemen on piquet that the French were burning and destroying everything they could not remove, including gun-carriages, carts, &c. On 5 March the British cavalry on the left of the Light Division advanced a little and the infantry divisions in rear closed up. In fact everything pointed to an early retreat of the French. On 6 March a peasant brought in a message from the Portuguese *juiz de fore* of Santarem to say that the French had passed through that place at 2 a.m. and were in full retreat. The Light Division paraded at 3 a.m. and at daylight advanced across the bridge, the 1st Battalion leading. O'Hare's Company as the senior Captain's was in advance and as his advanced scouts crossed the bridge in the darkness they came upon what they imagined to be a French sentry at whom one of them instantly fired. Great was the chaff when it was found that the enemy had repeated their old trick of posting a dummy sentry of straw dressed in uniform with a pole as a musket! However no delay was caused and the Division marched into Santarem at noon, the Riflemen carrying their "prisoner" with them. The town was found to be quite deserted and after an hour's halt the Division pushed on and at nightfall occupied Pernes where the French had destroyed the bridge. The sights which met our men on entering Santarem and again at Pernes were most distressing. The towns had been wrecked and the few inhabitants who had

remained, exposed to every sort of brutality, the women violated and many of them murdered. The survivors looked like living skeletons, the streets were strewn with household goods and furniture half-burnt or destroyed, many were quite impassable and were blocked with filth and rubbish whilst here and there lay the putrifying body of a man or the carcase of a mule. The condition of the miserable Portuguese excited the greatest indignation among the British soldiers and needless to say led to many reprisals on the part of our Portuguese allies later on.

But although the Light Division was thus in pursuit of Junot's rear-guard Wellington was still unaware in which direction lay Masséna's main line of retreat. As a provisional measure he ordered Picton to follow the Light Division whilst the 7th Division kept touch of Reynier who had retreated on Thomar, the 4th and 5th Divisions advancing to Santarem. When on the 7th he heard that Loison who had been left on the Tagus had destroyed his boats and bridge equipment and marched on Thomar he realized that Masséna's plan was to fall back by Coimbra and took steps accordingly. Turning to the French side, on the 7th Ney and d'Erlon (as we shall call Drouet in future) were in position at Leiria to cover Masséna's withdrawal north. Reynier was at Thomar, where he was shortly joined by Loison from Punhete and Junot was at Chão de Maças. Masséna's whole force was thus assembled on the general line from Leiria to Thomar.

On the 7th the Light Division pursued the enemy's rear-guard, the Royal Dragoons and Horse Artillery overtaking them near Torres Novas and inflicting some loss. That night the Rifles halted at Arga and La Marrosa. The advance was resumed at daybreak next morning the 8th, and our men overtook some sixty sick French soldiers, all in a miserable condition from sickness and fever, mounted upon donkeys, and abandoned by their comrades. On this day our Dragoons and Horse Artillery again pressed the rear-guard hard and they made a stand in the village of Paialvo. The 1st Battalion as soon as it came up was

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ordered to dislodge them which they did very speedily, with the aid of two of Ross's 6-pounders, the French destroying four tumbrils and some of their "gun-tackling" to prevent it falling into our hands. On 9 March matters became even more lively. The right wing of the Rifles and the cavalry pushed on at daybreak and after a rapid march of five hours found the enemy's rear-guard in position north of Leiria at the junction of the great road from Lisbon on Coimbra. The French showed a strong force of cavalry with infantry in support. The 1st German Hussars delivered a very spirited charge on the advanced squadron of the 11th *Grénadiers á cheval* and took some prisoners.

After leaving Torres Novas the men of O'Hare's Company had been mounted behind the Royal Dragoons and pushed well forward and on this day they had plenty of skirmishing but escaped without loss. The Dragoons took part in the attack on the French cavalry and captured several prisoners. Simmons describes how the German Hussars being much incensed at a report that the French had recently killed two of their comrades in cold blood were about to put some of the *Grénadiers á cheval* to death and that Major Gilmour of the Rifles begged them off. During this day the Riflemen captured about forty prisoners, stragglers as well as a number of horses and some more "gun-tackling."

On 9 March Ney fell back on Pombal, Junot being at Venda da Cruz about two miles beyond. The Light Division advanced through Leiria which was found to have been set on fire in several places. The monastery at Batalha had been looted and destroyed and the villages on both sides of the line of retreat burnt and many of the inhabitants murdered. Never was there a greater scene of devastation. Now and again a wounded Frenchman was found who had been horribly tortured by the Portuguese peasantry in revenge.¹ In the afternoon the Light

¹ Robinson's *Life of Picton*, vol. i, p. 385.

Division reached Venda Nova and, the enemy being found to be in considerable force in front of Pombal, it was drawn back a little, the Rifles falling back about two miles to a pine wood where they bivouacked. Towards evening Pack's Brigade and another brigade from the 1st Division marched in.

On this day the command of the Light Division passed into the hands of Sir William Erskine, Craufurd having gone home on leave of absence. The change was not a happy one as all accounts show that Erskine lacked the peculiar qualifications of a leader of light troops which were so conspicuous in Craufurd. Craufurd's absence at this time was most unfortunate and none the less so that it was due entirely to his own obstinacy and curious egoism which made him consider his own wishes before all else. So far back as November he had applied to Wellington for leave to go to England during the winter and had been refused and for good and sufficient reasons. Craufurd however was not to be easily rebuffed and after a correspondence with Wellington he somehow managed to gain his point and went home early in February, with the result that when the British advanced he was not there to take command of his splendid Division and pursue Masséna with effect.

It is only fair on Craufurd to say that he was by no means the only General Officer who added to Wellington's many worries by pressing for leave or absence during the winter months. Some were undoubtedly unwell and unfit for duty but others, like Craufurd, were simply anxious to get home to their families in England.¹

¹ See Wellington MSS. December 1910, quoted by Fortescue, viii, p. 24.

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FIGHT AT POMBAL.

10 March 1811.

The French rear-guard retired before dawn and our cavalry and Horse Artillery set out in pursuit but were held up at Pombal village. Close to the town there was an old ruined castle on a very commanding height, in this Ney disposed one battalion and leaving Mermet's Division to hold the heights north of the town, he withdrew the remainder of his force. Some *voltigeurs* and light infantry occupied some walled enclosures on the south side of the town and these the Light Division so soon as it came up was ordered to dislodge. Two Companies of the Rifles, under O'Hare, with the 3rd Caçadores under Elder led off the attack and making a very spirited dash across the bridge outside the town drove the defenders from the walls. They now became engaged with the *voltigeurs* who had occupied some houses and had to take shelter in some adjacent buildings. After a lively interchange of fire Sergeant Fleming of the Rifles with a few men rushed one of the houses held by the French and took some prisoners after which the Riflemen by degrees cleared the other houses; Lieutenant Hopwood was severely wounded in the thigh when engaged in this task. The attackers now made for the old ruined castle and had some very obstinate fighting with the *voltigeurs* who disputed the possession of the place with great courage. The rest of the Light Division was meanwhile moving up in support and Picton's Division was ordered to cross the stream on the left, lower down. The Riflemen and the Caçadores drove the French back and elated with their success some of our men now pushed on through the town. Ney, who had been watching the fight from the heights, in order to extricate his rear-guard ordered up the four battalions of the 6th *Léger* and 69th *Ligne* who, after driving in the too venturesome Riflemen and Caçadores and taking a few prisoners, entered the town and brought away the detachment which had made

such an obstinate defence of the castle ; after which Ney barricaded the main street and set fire to some adjacent houses thereby delaying the main body of the Light Division which had now come up. By the time the streets were clear the French were well up the heights beyond and withdrew without further molestation beyond a few shots from Ross's guns which had, as usual, pushed on to the front. Picton meanwhile had crossed the stream below, but the hour was late and no more could be done. The losses on this day were small, only two officers and thirty-four men killed and wounded, the two Companies of the Rifles having one officer and four men hit. The French losses were four officers and fifty-nine men, all of the 6th *Léger* and 69th. At nightfall the Light Division bivouacked on the heights beyond the town, the Rifles being assigned a ploughed field where they were exposed to torrents of rain. Some officers' baggage was captured by our two Companies in the village, including a grey horse carrying the baggage of Colonel Pierre Soult, brother of the Marshal. Soult's belongings were sold by auction by the captors in the bivouac and his money which amounted to six dollars a head was divided out among the men of the Company. The Riflemen presented to Captain O'Hare "two beautiful gold medals" which they found in Soult's kit.¹ There was a feeling in the Light Division that they had not been given a fair chance on this day and that Erskine had bungled the business. Already it would seem they had begun to repent Craufurd's absence. On this day the 4th Division came up and the 1st, 5th and 6th were close at hand. Hitherto the pursuit of Masséna had not been carried out with very marked rapidity, due as we have seen to Wellington's uncertainty as to the main line of retreat, which had compelled him to scatter his Divisions. Now all was plain sailing, for he had five of his Divisions assembled, some 43,000 strong, and knew that

¹ Costello, *Adventures*, p. 52.

the bulk of Masséna's army was in front of him, numbering about 46,000.

At 5 o'clock on the morning of the 12th he advanced in three columns to attack Ney at Venda da Cruz but found that that wily Marshal had fallen back to Redinha on the Soure river five miles beyond. Wellington at once followed in pursuit moving as before in three columns with the Light Division on the left, the 3rd Division on the right, and Pack's Brigade followed by the 4th Division in the centre. The 1st and 6th Divisions marched some distance in rear of the central column.

COMBAT OF REDINHA.

12 March, 1811.

Redinha is on the left bank of the Soure River which is crossed by a causeway and a bridge north of the town. In front of the town there is a low ridge wooded in places; here Ney had posted Mermet's and Marchand's Divisions with a brigade of cavalry and fourteen guns with the right protected by some heights overgrown with fir trees and the left resting on some broken and wooded ravines on the banks of the Soure river above the town. Our cavalry had found out that Loison's Division was only seven miles east of Ney at Rabaçal whilst it was known that Junot's corps was not far off. Hence Ney could easily assemble a considerable force and Wellington always cautious, took steps to ascertain what was in front of him.

The fight opened with the Rifles being thrown forward in extended order by wings covering a front of over two miles. The left wing under Major Stewart had for their objective the wooded heights held by the French right, the right wing under Major Gilmour being similarly directed against their left. In this order they advanced across the open hollow ground in front of the French position receiving the attention of the enemy's artillery.

Kincaid who was with Stewart describes how the Riflemen advanced with impetuosity and soon gained a footing in the woods, driving back the French skirmishers. But on pushing on through the wood which was very thick they came right upon a French infantry regiment, no doubt part of Mermet's Division, which opened a furious fire on them and made any further advance impossible. This was on the French right, Gilmour's Riflemen on the French left being also held up. A desultory combat followed which according to some of those present lasted "about an hour."

Wellington with his usual caution decided to wait for the 4th Division to come into line. At 2 p.m. when he had deployed it and the 1st and 6th Divisions were close up, he ordered the Light Division to push forward into the woods on the French right and Picton to do the same on the left, the 4th Division and Pack's Portuguese moving in the centre. The Divisions were formed in two lines with the 1st and 6th Divisions in reserve in third line.

Meanwhile, Masséna having accomplished his purpose in forcing Wellington to deploy, took advantage of the lull in the fighting to withdraw Marchand's Division to some heights about two miles in rear of the river, leaving Mermet's Division with the guns and cavalry to show a bold front to the rapidly advancing British, a task they performed to admiration.¹ The sight must have been peculiarly fine and has

¹ According to some accounts, Marchand had been withdrawn across the river by Ney *before* the action commenced. Curiously enough there is considerable difference of opinion as to whether the fight at Redinha was carried out in *one* stage or *two*. Oman describes it as in one stage whereas Fortescue following Napier, Moorsom and Koch (*l'ie de Masséna*) inclines to the belief that there were two. My account has been compiled from the various Regimental authorities quoted but more especially from Major-General John Cox's MSS. Journal, who writes "the woods covering the flanks of their (the French) position were briskly attacked by both wings of the 95th Rifles and soon carried. The Light and 3rd Division were then placed in two lines supported by Pack's Brigade and the Cavalry with the other Divisions in reserve. The line of attack having been beautifully formed under a sharp fire from the enemy

been described by several of those present. Simmons who was with the left wing says : " It was a fine sunshiny morning and the red coats and pipeclayed belts and glittering of the men's arms in the sun looked beautiful, I felt a pleasure which none but a soldier so placed can feel." And Costello who was in O'Hare's Company on the right wing, after they had gained the summit of the broken wooded ground on the right, says : " From its eminence I remember to have seen the finest views of the two armies I ever witnessed. The Rifles were extended in the distance for perhaps two miles and were rapidly on the advance against the enemy's position. These were followed by our heavy columns whose heads were just emerging from a wood about a quarter of a mile in our rear." Kincaid is even more enthusiastic. After humorously recording how upon driving in their outposts " we instantly quarrelled with them on a very large scale," he adds : " I have never seen a more splendid picture of war than was there shown. * * * We light folks were employed in the early part of the action in clearing the opposing *lights* from the woods which flanked his position, and in the course of an hour 30,000 British troops as if by magic were seen advancing on the plain in three lines, with the order and precision of a field day ; the French disappeared before them like snow under the influence of a summer's sun. The forces on both sides were handled by masters of the art."¹ The French light troops made an obstinate defence, but eventually, the French were driven from the ridge and down the steep slope into the village which was on fire in several places with our Riflemen hard at their heels. After making

and *strong bodies of Light troops thrown out*, a general advance was made on the French position from which he broke by retreating in battalions from his right but was soon thrown into disorder by the pressing forward of the light troops who drove their rear through the town of Redinha in great confusion."

It is obvious that a considerable time must have elapsed between the first attack of the Rifles and the general advance thus described.

¹ *Adventures*, pp. 49, 50, *Random Shots*, pp. 134-5.

a gallant running fight of it the French fell back on the bridge. Here they got blocked and there was some hand-to-hand fighting and many of the enemy were forced over the battlements of the bridge or threw themselves over to escape from their pursuers. Some personal combats took place in the river bed and one of our men, Rifleman Muckston, seized a French officer who had been driven into the water and dragged him out. The Frenchman wore the Cross of the Legion of Honour which he handed over, together with thirty-six doubloons to his captor who presented the decoration to his officer Lieutenant Simmons who notes, evidently with some compunction, "I took it, but I should have felt happy to have returned it to the Frenchman."

At the bridge, the French 50th Regiment suffered much, being the last to retreat. The French rear-guard made a gallant attempt to re-form when across the river, but although they occasionally gave our skirmishers some discharges of grape-shot the Light Division pressed on accompanied by the light troops of the 1st Division and of Pack's Brigade and followed by the cavalry.¹ Meanwhile Picton had turned the French left, and the whole British force crossed the river.

Ney's disposition of Marchand's Division on the heights was however so imposing that Wellington reformed his troops and once again deployed into a fighting line and advanced in three columns, repeating the tactics of the morning. But Ney so soon as he found his flanks threatened withdrew and fell back on Condeixa, about eight miles north of Redinha. At nightfall our skirmishing line was recalled and the Light Division formed up and bivouacked on some high ground. The French rear-guard did the same in the valley below, the advanced sentries of the two forces being not more than 200 yards apart. Wellington in his despatch referring to the first attack on

¹ John Cox, MS. *Journal*.

this day on the French position, says, "I have never seen the French infantry driven from a wood in more gallant style."¹

A curious incident took place this evening which exemplifies the good feeling which existed between our officers and the French. It was towards evening whilst our skirmishers were still driving some of the French before them that the officer commanding them held up his sword with a white handkerchief tied to it and coming to a parley with our officer proposed a truce for the night. This was agreed to and the French commander and his subalterns were invited by our officers to share their rations. After a scanty dinner of ration beef and ration rum they separated and next morning at daybreak resumed their respective roles of pursuers and pursued. Lieutenant Fitz Maurice of the 95th has described how three months later when on piquet on the Dos Casas he saw a French officer limping towards him, who saluted him and said, "*Est-ce-que vous ne me reconnaissez pas ?*" adding, "I was one of your guests at Redinha. Next morning one of your men wounded me, no matter. I come now, not as a spy, but we have heard that you are short of rations and I come in return for your kindness to offer you a share of ours." Fitz Maurice was too old a soldier to admit that they were in want of supplies though indeed they were, so thanking him for his proffered kindness which he declined (with inward longing and regret) they parted as good friends as they had been on the night of the fight at Redinha.²

Two officers of the 95th, Lieutenants Robert Chapman and Robert Beckwith, were wounded and four Riflemen killed and nine were reported wounded, but the returns of this and the other fights during

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 14 March, 1811. Sir W. Erskine in his report incorrectly gives the whole credit of this exploit to the 52nd and Caçadores, while it was performed "to the admiration of the whole army" by four companies of the 1st Battalion. See *Records 1st Battalion*, also *History of the 52nd (Moorsom)*.

² *Recollections of a Rifleman's Wife*, p. 200.

this time are incomplete. The British losses at Redinha were eight men killed and eight officers and 112 men wounded ; to these must be added the losses in the four regiments of Caçadores, the total casualties being 205. The total French loss was about the same as that of the Allies, namely 227.

The "Combat of Redinha" has been often cited as a fine example of how a skilful rear-guard commander, by the judicious selection of his fighting ground can delay a much stronger enemy force and it is certain that Ney by his admirable tactics on this day delayed Wellington's pursuit and prevented him from advancing more than ten miles in twenty-four hours. During the night Ney continued his retreat on Condeixa, where the roads to Coimbra and Almeida diverge.

Masséna had now to decide whether he should retreat on Coimbra or Almeida. He knew of Trant's Portuguese at the first place, and also that Wellington had sent the 6th Division through Soure whence it could threaten the flank of a march on Coimbra. D'Erlon had started on the 11th for Ponte da Murcella and Almeida with a big convoy of 800 sick and wounded, whilst Loison was still at Rabaçal, and Reynier (IInd Corps) at Espinhal. For these and sundry other reasons he decided to abandon the Coimbra road and to cut across country along the by-track from Condeixa which would bring him on the main Thomar-Celorico road at Miranda do Corvo. He therefore ordered the VIIIth Corps to take that route and the IInd to hold on to Espinhal whilst Ney was to cover the retreat at Condeixa supported on his left by Loison.

AFFAIR AT CONDEIXA.

13 March 1811.

On the 13th the French rear-guard decamped, as usual before daylight, and the Light Division following on their heels came up with them

during the day strongly posted in front of Condeixa, the only approach to which being along a causeway enfiladed by several guns. Wellington ordered it as well as the 4th Division which was following it on the same road to halt whilst he sent Picton with the 3rd Division to work round the French left and called up the 6th Division from near Soure to turn their right. Whilst the Rifles were halted in front of Condeixa waiting for the order to advance Lord Wellington appeared and rode to a hill a little in front of them. Here he remained whilst the flank movements he had ordered were being carried out. Some of the French tirailleurs crept up unperceived from the village and opened fire on Wellington and his staff, fortunately without effect. The Rifles instantly sent out some skirmishers to drive back the French but the latter ran off on their approach. Ney who had become aware of Picton's out-flanking march now judged it time to retire, setting fire to Condeixa before leaving it. The Light Division thereupon was ordered on and marched through the town about noon. In places flames from the burning houses lapped across the main street barring the way and causing some delay whilst a way could be cleared through adjacent walls and buildings. The French only withdrew about three miles beyond Condeixa and the British troops closed on them and bivouacked. Throughout the night there was continual firing between the advanced posts of the two armies.

ACTION OF CASAL NOVO.

14 March 1811.

Very early on the 14th whilst a dense fog still obscured all view the Light Division advanced and soon was in touch with the enemy. This was Marchand's Division, strongly posted amid walled enclosures and broken ground near the village of Casal Novo with orders to hold on as long as possible so as to cover the retirement

of Junot's and Reynier's corps along the main Thomar-Celorico road in rear. Wellington decided to threaten Ney in front whilst Picton's Division turned his right and Pack's Portuguese turned his left. Erskine however who was in command of the advanced troops elected to press on and the Rifles became engaged with the enemy's outpost line. The heights and village of Casal Novo were attacked with great spirit by the left wing of the 95th under Major John Stewart, reinforced soon by the right wing under Gilmour. Erskine thereupon pushed forward three companies of the 52nd in support soon followed by the rest of that Regiment. Wellington rode up at this time and the fog lifting it was seen that the French were in force and that the Rifles and 52nd were practically unsupported and close up to the enemy. He at once ordered up six companies of the 43rd under Captain William Napier to reinforce them and before long the whole five Regiments of the Light Division were extended into one skirmish-line and closely engaged. Some very hard fighting followed, the French being gradually pushed back from their successive strongholds.

No less than eleven of Marchand's battalions and a battery of artillery opposed the Light Division and the losses among our men were considerable. Picton's Division meanwhile had come up on the left flank of the French and they fell back to some heights about two miles east of Casal Novo where Mermet's Division was strongly posted. The Light Division again attacked in front and Picton's in flank and soon dislodged them but only to make a third obstinate stand. Finally about three p.m. they were driven from the strong heights of Chão de Lamas, being attacked by the Light Division in front, Pack's Portuguese on their right, whilst Picton once again struck at their left. Ney now fell back about six miles on Miranda do Corvo behind the river Eça, where Masséna had assembled the bulk of his army. He was joined this same evening by Reynier from Espinhal who had found himself threatened by Cole with the 5th Division.

This day's fighting at Casal Novo was a memorable one for the Light Division. It is true it was held up and checked for some time by Marchand's determined resistance to Erskine's ill-advised and premature attack with less than half the numbers of his adversary. All accounts agree that the work of our army was rendered particularly arduous by the favourable nature of the country for a retiring force, not only to occupy successive positions as has been described, but to hold various defensible posts in the broken ground from each of which they had to be dislodged before the advance could be resumed. In fact it was a day of "minor tactics," for the Regimental officer especially. Kincaid says grimly "At Casal Novo on the 14th we breakfasted, dined and supped on powder and ball . . . we were the whole day battering our brains against stone walls at a great sacrifice of life, whereas had we waited with common prudence until a proper period, when the flank movements going on under the direction of our illustrious Chief had begun to take effect, the whole of the loss would have been on the other side, but as it was, I am afraid that although we carried our point we were the greatest sufferers. . . . At the commencement of the action just as the mist of the morning began to clear away a section of our Company was thrown forward among the skirmishers while the other three remained in reserve behind a gentle eminence, and the officer commanding it, seeing a piece of rising ground close to the left which gave him some uneasiness, he desired me to take a man with me to the top of it and to give him notice if the enemy attempted any movement on that side. We got to the top, but if we had not found a couple of good-sized stones on the spot which afforded shelter at the moment we should never have got anywhere else for I don't think they expended less than a thousand shots upon us in the course of a few minutes. My companion John Rouse a steady sturdy old Rifleman, no sooner found himself snugly covered than he lugged out his rifle to give them one in return but the slightest

exposure brought a dozen balls to the spot in an instant and I was amused to see old Rouse, at every attempt, jerking back his head with a sort of knowing grin, as if it were only a parcel of school-boys on the other side threatening him with snowballs; but seeing at last that his time for action was not yet come, he withdrew his rifle, and, knowing my inexperience in those matters he very good-naturedly called to me not to expose myself looking out just then, for said he 'there will be no moving among them while this shower continues.' When the shower ceased we found that they had also ceased to hold their formidable post and as quickly as may be we were to be seen standing in their old shoes mixed up with some of the 43rd."¹ Kincaid sums up this day's work as follows. "We drove them from one stronghold to another over a large tract of very difficult country, mountainous and rocky, and thickly intersected with stone walls and were involved in one continued hard skirmish from daylight until dark. This was the most harassing day's fighting that I ever experienced."²

Such an opinion from an officer who served continuously throughout the following years of the war is the best evidence as to the severity of the work on this day. Simmons records how "the nature of the ground gave the enemy repeatedly the advantage over us." Kincaid also mentions an interesting incident as to the identity of the Frenchmen who made such a gallant stand on this day. "We found by buttons on the coats of some of the fallen foe that we had this day been opposed to the French 95th Regiment (the same number as we were then) and I cut off several of them which I preserved as trophies."³ Costello describes how the French skirmishers from time to time made short stands to keep our Riflemen in check whilst a few of their rear sections poured a running fire into them. At one point the French held on to some old walls until the advancing skirmishing line began to outflank

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, pp. 136-139.

² Costello, *Adventures*, pp. 53-54.

³ *Adventures*, p. 56. The 95th *Ligne* were in Conroux's Division of Junot's Corps.

them when they all retreated except one man "who remained loading and firing as if he had a whole division to back him." He fired at Costello when he was within fifty yards of him and narrowly missed him. Costello returned the fire and shot him. On coming up to the spot he found another Frenchman, a big sergeant, lying wounded beside the first with a broken thigh who said "*Hélas, vous avez tué mon pauvre frère.*" The cause of the first man having remained behind was evident, it was in the hope of protecting his wounded brother. As soon as the fighting was over Costello returned to the spot to see if he could help the brothers but found them both dead and stripped, no doubt murdered by the Portuguese camp-followers.

The Regiment lost an excellent officer on this day, Major John Stewart, who was shot through the body when leading on his men to an attack on the village. Simmons curtly notes "As many others have done, he asked me if he was mortally wounded. I told him he was. He thanked me and died the following day."¹ Stewart had a fine fighting record. He had originally joined the 79th Highlanders as a Volunteer and obtained an Ensign's Commission in it in 1795. He was promoted to Lieutenant the same year and in 1800 was one of the original Experimental Corps of Riflemen who joined at Horsham. He served in the Ferrol Expedition and subsequently under Abercromby in Egypt and was gazetted to the Rifle Corps in August 1800.² He served in Spain and Portugal and was in command of the 1st Battalion at Bussaco, receiving the Gold Medal for that battle. He had a great reputation as a "most admirable officer of light troops, skilful in handling them, experienced in outpost duty and (after Beckwith's example) while strictly maintaining discipline, never harassing the men with matters of minute detail."³

¹ Simmons had been a medical student before he joined the 95th.

² See Part I, p. 29 where his name in the Gazette appears as Stuart.

³ Cope, p. 75.

Another excellent officer mortally wounded on this day was Lieutenant John Strode. He had originally joined the 7th Fusiliers in 1806 and was gazetted to the Rifles in 1809. He was famous as a rifle-shot and always carried a rifle in action. During the fight a bullet struck him in the thigh. As he fell he called out to Simmons to take his rifle exclaiming "This Simmons may be of use to you." Simmons adds "I had no time to stand on ceremony but moved on." Strode died of his wound at Coimbra on 31 March.

These were the only two casualties recorded among the officers of the Rifles on this day. What the losses were among the N.C.O.s and men is unknown for no separate returns were made for any of the fights during the month of March 1811. The total losses of the British force on this day was eleven officers and 119 men killed and wounded and twenty-five of the Portuguese. More than half the losses were incurred in the first advance in the early morning in which the 43rd, 52nd and 95th lost nine officers and over eighty men. The losses of the French were, so far as can be ascertained, considerably less, the number they admit being only fifty-five killed and wounded during the whole day.¹ On the other hand they lost over 100 prisoners, some of them

¹ Oman (vol. iv, p. 152) points out that the casualties were in all probability considerably more. In the French lists the losses on the 14th (Casal Novo) and the 15th (Foz d' Arouce) have got mixed. When the *Mémoires du Général Baron de Marbot* were first published in 1891 I read with considerable interest his account of his combat with a "*jeune officier de Chasseurs-à-pied anglais*" since it was clear that his victim must have been an officer of the 95th Rifles. In the English translation he was described as "a young light infantry officer" which was an obvious error on the part of the translator. All Marbot's details are most realistic and he describes how, in spite of his being a well-mounted cavalry officer on Masséna's Staff this bloodthirsty young Rifle Officer "*s'avance au trot de son petit cheval*" and challenged him to single combat heaping abuse on him as "*un lâche*" until he turned in his wrath and after a brief encounter plunged his sabre into the throat of the unfortunate, covering himself with his blood and who bit the dust with rage! Marbot also engaged two English Hussars who attacked him at the same time and wounded and drove them off. He then describes how the English Riflemen having come up to the spot where

men who had been cut off in the long day's running fight, others stragglers or marauders.

Lord Wellington when writing about the fight at Casal Novo said "In the operations of this day, the 43rd, 52nd and 95th Regiments, the 3rd Caçadores, under the command of Colonels Drummond and Beckwith and Major Patrickson, Lieutenant-Colonel Ross and Majors Gilmour and Stewart and Lieutenant-Colonel Elder particularly distinguished themselves." He also mentions "the troops of horse artillery under the command of Captains Ross and Bull."¹

The Light Division after pressing through Casal Novo halted near the burning village of Chão de Lamas at nightfall, the Rifles finding the piquets along its outskirts. Some of the officers and men who entered the place found the streets strewn with the dying and dead whilst in the houses were many starving inhabitants too weak to move. A number of women and children were rescued from the burning houses probably only to meet death in another form since nothing could be done for them. The scene that night is described as being one of terrific grandeur; the village which was burning furiously lay in a hollow between two steep hills only half a mile apart which were both in a blaze of light from the British and French camp fires.

their officer lay he was exposed to their fire as well as to that of his own countrymen. The combat was an heroic one, the only weak point about it being that no officer of the 95th Rifles was killed by a sword-cut on that day or even wounded. In order to make sure that it was not some officer of the 43rd or 52nd I went through all the casualty lists of the Light Division and found that the *only* other officer killed at Casal Novo was Lieutenant Gifford of the 52nd who was shot through the head. Also that *none* of our Hussars was wounded on that day!

In 1894 I wrote a short account of the affair for the *Chronicle* but did not publish it as Marbot's genial inaccuracies had become known to the world and at the time it seemed unnecessary to contradict this obvious mis-statement.

Oman vol. iv, p. 153, *note* has however done so and rightly, for of late years there has been a tendency among some military writers to quote Marbot seriously as an authority.

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 14 March 1811. Sir W. Cope has inadvertently, on p. 73, ascribed this commendation of Gilmour and Stewart to their conduct at the Action of the Redinha, two days earlier.

Masséna's position at Miranda do Corvo was not an enviable one for he was practically in front of a defile leading through a rough and mountainous country with one indifferent road along which he had to move some 44,000 men encumbered with over 5,000 sick and wounded and a big baggage train. Rapid retreat was his only salvation ; accordingly on the night of the 14th he destroyed all his wheeled transport including even ambulances, the unfortunate wounded men being put on pack animals or abandoned to their fate ; all the horses, mules or donkeys found unfit to work were ordered to be killed. At 10 o'clock that same night the army fell back, the IInd Corps leading followed by the VIIIth at midnight. Ney with the VIth Corps remained in rear and after setting fire to Miranda do Corvo started off at 1 a.m. on the 15th. The main body after an arduous march of ten miles reached the river Ceira at mid-day and crossing it by a damaged bridge just beyond Foz d'Arouce took up a strong position on some heights in rear of it. Ney halted Marchand's and Mermet's Divisions on some hills at Foz d'Arouce sending across the river only Loison's Division. Most of his cavalry also crossed the river and those that did not, seem to have kept a poor look-out for their persistent foes of the Light Division. The latter however did not put in an appearance for some hours. The early morn of the 15th was very foggy and Wellington could not ascertain what force lay in front of him across the river Eça. When his reconnoitring patrols had reported that the French had retired, although the fog lay heavy he at once advanced and at 4 p.m. came up with Ney's rear-guard at Foz d'Arouce. Seeing that the French were not on the alert although it was late in the day he ordered the Light Division to attack the French right whilst Picton attacked their left.

FIGHT AT FOZ D'AROUCE.

15 March, 1811.

We will now follow the fortunes of the Rifles in this day's work. A reconnoitring patrol sent out in the early morning came across a dead French officer and many dead men and much ammunition buried by the road-side. When the Rifles advanced they came upon many dead and wounded Frenchmen, also gun-carriages and waggons. Passing through the burning town of Miranda do Corvo which was full of sick and wounded men abandoned by their comrades, they pushed on until 4.30 p.m. when they halted on the high ground overlooking the Ceira valley. It was now that Wellington rode up to the Battalion and Beckwith took occasion in conversation with him to mention that our men were badly in want of food, having outmarched all supplies in their recent rapid advances, and that some, from want of food and weakness, had in consequence been unable to keep up; Wellington thereupon promised that they should be sent the first rations that came up. At the time our men were busy cooking such provisions as they had found abandoned by the French; Simmons among them was "anxiously watching a savoury morsel of beef" he was frying when Wellington in his hearing said to Beckwith "Fall in your Battalion and attack the enemy; drive in their skirmishers and I will turn their flank with the 3rd and 1st Divisions."¹

It was now about 5 o'clock and soon the whole of the Light Division was smartly engaged. Our men advanced through a pine wood, the French bullets rattling through the branches. In this fight Kincaid had a narrow escape; seeing as he describes it "some inexperienced light troops rushing up a deep road-way to certain destruction" he ran forward to warn them back and was struck by a musket-ball above the left ear which knocked him out for some time. Upon regaining

¹ Simmons, p. 145.

consciousness he found he was between the two sets of combatants, the balls from either side whistling over him since "the rascals who had got me into the scrape had been driven back." Jumping to his feet he "joined them a short distance in rear when one of them, a soldier of the 60th, came and told me an officer of ours had been killed a short time before pointing to the spot where I myself had fallen and that he had tried to take his jacket off but that the advance of the enemy had prevented him." Kincaid says "I told him that I was the one who had been killed and that I was deuced obliged to him for his kind intentions while I felt still more so to the enemy for their timely advance otherwise I have no doubt my friend would have taken a fancy to my trowsers also for I found that he had *absolutely unbuttoned* my jacket!"¹

The wing of the Rifles taking advantage of a hollow road, probably the same that had so nearly proved fatal to Kincaid, pushed forward vigorously and reached the village of Foz d'Arouce, the remainder of the Light Division engaging Marchand in front whilst Picton pressed in on Mermet's troops on the French left. Ross's guns were sent at a gallop to a point whence they opened a severe fire on the enemy. A panic now occurred among one of the French Regiments, the 39th, which, hearing the firing of the Rifles almost in rear of them, broke and fell back on the bridge.² Here they met some French cavalry which all too late was trying to advance across the river, and a block ensued. The 39th Regiment thereupon attempted to ford the river down-stream but many men were drowned, others including the Colonel were taken prisoners and an Eagle thrown into the river.³ This was found two days later and sent home by Wellington in July.⁴

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 57.

² Various reasons have been given for this. Marcel in his *Campagnes*, p. 129, who was present, says that the 39th "*ayant lâché pied un peu trop vite*," threw two other battalions into confusion.

³ Leach, p. 201 and Simmons, p. 146, both say *two* Eagles.

⁴ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 4 July 1811.

Ney now made a vigorous counter-attack with the 3rd Battalion of the 69th Regiment¹ which charged the Riflemen in Foz d'Arouce and drove them back for a brief time on their supports of the 52nd. This gave the French a little breathing time and they withdrew in considerable disorder across the bridge under the fire of both Ross's and Bull's guns. Night was now fast falling and it is said that some of the French Regiments sent down to extricate their comrades at the bridge fired into them, as also did the artillery of the VIIIth corps. The British Army bivouacked on the heights recently held by Ney's rear-guard and occupied the village of Foz d'Arouce. The Rifles and no doubt others also, found a number of cooking pots on the fires containing most savoury messes which were gratefully appreciated. Upon opening the knapsacks of the Frenchmen a number of biscuits were found nicely rolled up in stockings in packets of twenty which were a perfect godsend to our men who had been some days without bread. The welcome dinner thus so unexpectedly supplied to men who were literally starving gave rise to the saying, whenever they found themselves on short rations during the rest of the war "Well, d——n my eyes, we must either fall in with the French or a Commissary to-day, I don't care which." The losses in this sharp affair were but small, only four officers and 67 men killed and wounded, of these, two officers, Lieutenant M'Culloch (who was wounded, at the Coa) and Lieutenant Kincaid and about twenty men belonged to the Rifles, but the return is incomplete. The French losses, according to Ney's Aide-de-Camp, Sprünglin, were about 400, Marbot places them as low as 150, probably they were not far off 300.

At 2 o'clock in the morning of the 16th the French completed the destruction of the bridge which had proved such a death-trap for so many of their comrades and when daylight came it was seen that they had withdrawn from their position on the heights beyond and that

¹ Marcel says the 69th and the 27th Regiments.

only a small rear-guard was watching the British line. It was clear that the French were in full retreat and Wellington, who as we have seen, had outmarched his supplies, decided to give his hard-worked troops a day's respite. He had good reason to be content with what he had effected, for he had driven the redoubtable Masséna off his main line of retreat along the good road to Coimbra and compelled him to take to the mountainous route on Celorico through a wasted country where want of food would keep him on the move. He now ordered Beresford to take over the 4th Division and some cavalry and to join the 2nd Division and watch the roads from Campo Mayor and Elvas in case Soult should elect to come that way after his capture of Badajoz, the news of which he had received during the night of the 13th. On this day Masséna withdrew the IInd and VIIIth Corps to Ponte da Murcella where they found the bridge across the Alva had been destroyed by the Portuguese Militia. Ney, on rear-guard as usual, formed up Marchand's Division some miles north of the Ceira and sent on Loison's and Mermet's. On the 16th the Light Division enjoyed a well-earned rest which was rendered doubly acceptable by the arrival towards evening of one day's rations. The sights on this day made a deep impression on all of our men and with small wonder. The channel of the Ceira and the bushes along it were full of dead Frenchmen whilst standing disconsolate on its banks were some 500 mules and donkeys which Ney had ordered to be destroyed since they could march no further. By a refinement of cruelty the French soldiers had *hamstrung* the unfortunate beasts which were found floundering about in tortures. "The poor animals looked up to us as if for vengeance" writes one Rifleman, and Kincaid says that our men were so disgusted and savage at the sight that he believes they would have served any of the enemy the same had they fallen into our hands.¹

¹ In the "*Campagnes du Capitaine Marcel*" of the French 69th *Ligne* a full account is given of this atrocious business (p. 128). He says two companies from the

History of the Rifle Brigade

Wellington in his despatch to Lord Liverpool in describing the attack on the heights of Foz d'Arouce says that "the 95th were in front of the Light Division and the troops behaved in a most gallant manner. The Horse Artillery likewise, under Captains Ross and Bull, distinguished themselves on this occasion."¹

The General Army Orders of the same date commence as follows:—

No. 1. The Commander of the Forces returns his thanks to the General and Staff Officers and Troops for their excellent conduct in the operations in the last ten days against the enemy. He requests the Commanding officers of the 43rd, 52nd and 95th Regiments to name a Sergeant in each Regiment to be recommended for a promotion to an Ensigncy, as a testimony of the particular approbation of the Commander of the Forces of these three Regiments.²

Such high praise was made all the more gratifying in that no other Regiment or Corps was mentioned by name in this General Order which it should be borne in mind covered the whole of the fighting from the day the Army advanced from Santarem. In compliance with this order, Sergeant Simpson, then acting Sergeant-Major of the Rifles was recommended, and was duly appointed an Ensign in the 2nd (Queen's) Regiment of Foot.

A very interesting side-light is cast on the condition of the roads and tracks along which our Army had to move at this time by No. 7 para. in the same General Order which directs that "Each Company

Marine Battalion were told off to "*couper les jarrets*." He adds that these unfortunate donkeys had been their salvation (some 20,000 having been used to assist them in their retreat from Torres Vedras). So much so was this recognized that a favourite caricature of the time was one of a wounded French soldier riding a donkey labelled "*Le sauveur de l'Armée de Portugal*."

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 16 March 1811.

² *Well. Supp. Desp.*, vii, p. 82.

in every Battalion of Infantry may be told off in threes; when the column is to be formed for the march, the companies must be wheeled up or backwards by threes and each stand in column of three men in front, which is as large a number as the greater proportion of the roads in Portugal will admit."

There is another point in connection with this fight which is most instructive and hinges on the question of letting officers and men know as far as possible the object and scope of any military operation they may be engaged in. At Foz d'Arouce, as we have seen, Ney made a sharp counter-attack and claimed to have held back his pursuers. The French Captain Marcel who was in the Battalion of the 69th Regiment which charged a Portuguese Regiment approaching the bridge (*Campagnes* p. 130) explicitly states that the British Divisions "fell back two leagues" (!) This of course is an obvious mis-statement. Kincaid writing in 1835 of the fight says "I often lamented in the course of the war that battalion officers on occasions of that kind were never entrusted with a peep behind the curtain. Had we been told before we advanced that there was but a single division in our front, with a river close behind them we would have hunted them to death; and scarcely a man could have escaped but, as it was, their greatest loss was occasioned by their own fears and precipitancy in taking to the river at unfordable places—for we were alike ignorant of the river, the localities, or the object of the attack—so that when we carried the position and exerted ourselves like *prudent* officers to hold our men in hand we were from *want of information defeating the very object* which had been *intended*, that of *hunting them to the finale*."¹

Kincaid ends up with the following excellent remark. "When there is no object in view beyond the simple breaking of heads of

¹ All the above italics are thus marked in the old copy of *Random Shots* (pp. 142-43) once belonging to an officer who evidently was present at Foz d'Arouce, referred to on p. 139 (note) of this book.

those opposed to us there requires no speechification but on all occasions, like the one related, it ought never to be lost sight of—it is easily done—it *never* by any possibility *can prove disadvantageous* and I have seen many instances in which the advantage *would have been incalculable*” ! He then proceeds to show how at the great battle of Vitoria the Rifles lost a splendid opportunity through being absolutely unaware of the object of their attack. I have quoted Kincaid so freely in this book as a cheery and devil-may-care officer that it is due to his memory to show how sound he was in his military instincts and that he could be serious enough when the occasion demanded.

On 16 March Masséna continued his retreat to Ponte da Murcella leaving Ney with the rear-guard a few miles north of Foz d’Arouce. Next day he crossed the Alva river and disposed his corps along the Celorico road which runs roughly parallel to it with a view to contest its passage at any point. That evening the British cavalry followed by the Light Division and 6th Division reached Ponte da Murcella. The remaining three Divisions and the Portuguese on the same day marched north-east along the heights on the south bank of the Alva so as to gain some fords near Arganil. Masséna, fearing that Wellington might cross the river here and cut off his retreat along the Celorico road, continued his retreat on the night of the 18th and by nightfall on the 19th his leading corps, the VIIIth, was at Pinhancos with the IInd and IVth some miles behind, having covered over twenty miles. On the 20th Masséna on reaching Maceira divided his force into two columns, the VIIIth corps continuing its march along the road to Villa Cortes and the IInd taking the eastern track to Gouvea. On the 21st the VIIIth corps reached Celorico and by the following day the whole of Masséna’s forces were at that place and at Guarda. It is convenient for the purposes of this story to take this date as the end of Masséna’s retreat since it was now in his power to march unmolested on

Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo. That he did not do so was owing to his desire to make one more effort before he left Portugal. Such is in broad outline the movements of the French during the week following on the fight of Foz d'Arouce. We will now see what share the Light Division bore in the business.

On 17 March, the second day after the fight at Foz d'Arouce, the Light Division crossed the river Ceira which although now little more than knee-deep was still running swiftly and difficult to ford and after a short march bivouacked in a pine wood about two miles short of the Alva, no rations having come up. Early on the 18th the Light Division advanced to Ponte da Murcella where the bridge was found to have been destroyed and drove the French piquets across the Alva. The French were in position on the far bank with artillery posted to command the approach to it. Later on our nine-pounders arrived and opened a heavy fire. Apparently about this time Ney received word that a portion of the British force which had moved up the left bank of the Alva had crossed by a ford near Pombeiro and threatened to cut his line of retreat. He instantly ordered a retirement which was quickly carried out. "I never saw *Johnny* go off in such confusion," writes Simmons. Our cavalry followed up the enemy and the Light Division again bivouacked in a pine wood near the river.

On the 19th a wooden bridge having been thrown across the Alva the Division passed over and bivouacked a few miles beyond. Our cavalry pressed on Ney's rear-guard and took over 600 prisoners. Many of these were sick or wounded men, who had been abandoned but others were stragglers and foraging parties. Among those taken was an Aide-de-Camp to Loison. With him was his wife who was dressed in a splendid Hussar uniform. Kincaid describes the couple pithily. "*He* was a Portuguese and a traitor and looked very like a man who would be hanged. *She* was a Spaniard and very handsome and looked very like a woman who would get married again." In the evening,

Wellington halted and ordered the cavalry and Light Division to carry on the pursuit, supported by the 3rd and 6th Divisions.

On the 20th the Light Division followed on after the cavalry and Horse Artillery but did not overtake the enemy and were ordered to halt near Galizes. This was the third day without any bread rations and the men found the meat alone very unpalatable. On this day the British cavalry overtook Ney's rear-guard, which consisted of a regiment of cavalry and two battalions of infantry, at Cea, but the commander would not attack without infantry and artillery ; Ross's guns were only two miles behind, but before they could come up the French withdrew. The German Hussars however captured some 500 prisoners and a quantity of sheep. This escape of the enemy caused much dissatisfaction and it is said that "everyone talked loudly throughout the day at the commander's conduct."¹ The infantry of the Light Division felt they had not been given a fair chance for they had always been ready to follow up closely our cavalry and Horse Artillery. In fact, only ten days earlier, in the attack on Pombal, Tomkinson describes how they "ran quick enough to keep up with the cavalry and guns at a trot."²

Masséna however owing to his forced march on the night of the 18-19 March had now drawn well ahead of his pursuers. On the 20th d'Erlon reached Celorico and Claparède was at Guarda and Belmonte whilst Junot was at Villa Cortez and Reynier at Gouvea. On the 21st our cavalry pushed on to Vinho and captured many more stragglers. That night the Light Division bivouacked in some fir woods near Maceira about eight miles in rear.

On this day, as already mentioned, the first phase of Masséna's retreat which had begun on 5 March from Santarem may be reckoned to have ended. He had out-distanced his pursuers and was only

¹ Tomkinson, p. 87.

² *Ibid.* p. 80.

twenty-five miles from Almeida and there was nothing to prevent him falling back on Ciudad Rodrigo beyond.

On the 22nd on account of bad weather the Light Division occupied houses at Moimenta. On the 23rd they bivouacked near Sampayo and next day halted at Mello where they remained for two days since they had once again out-marched all supplies.

As we have seen, it was upon the Light Division and the 3rd Division that most of the fighting fell in the various combats and minor affairs between the 11th and 19th March and these two Divisions were mainly opposed by Ney's two Divisions under Marchand and Mermet. Wellington's total force during this time never equalled Masséna's for he had detached two Divisions with Beresford. Hence he had to be cautious in his pursuit as he could never tell what was in front of him when the French made a stand.

As regards who bore the brunt of the fighting during Masséna's retreat it is most significant that out of twenty-eight British and Portuguese officers who were killed or wounded during the period covered, nineteen belonged to the Light Division and eight more to Picton's, leaving but one for the rest of the Army.

Similarly, of the forty-four French Infantry officers in the casualty lists, no less than thirty-seven belonged to Marchand's and Mermet's Divisions, leaving seven for the remainder of Masséna's Corps.¹

It can be said with confidence that there are few finer examples both of the handling of rear-guards and of troops in pursuit than are to be found in Ney's and Wellington's work at this time. To pretend as some writers have done that Ney was unduly nervous and did not wait

¹ Oman, vol. iv, p. 170. On pp. 172-3, he points out how widely the French and British accounts of the retreat vary and cites Marbot's figures and those of Masséna and his Aide-de-Camp, Fririon (who completely eclipsed his chief in the art of mendacity) and who gives the total French losses in the fights as 179, whereas they were actually about 600 !

long enough, or that Wellington lacked courage and push, are equally futile. Both were masters of the art.

Masséna's new strategic plan was to march his Army across the mountains by Guarda and Sabugal to the Portuguese frontier near Coria on the right bank of the Upper Tagus whence he could resume his advance on Lisbon and where he would be more or less in touch with the Vth Corps in Estremadura and the other Corps eastward. The objections to such a scheme were overwhelming; the country was barren and destitute of supplies, his army was in a state of disintegration and was shoeless and during the retreat he had lost the larger part of his wheeled transport. So it was that when on 22 March he ordered his various Corps to march south on Guarda in place of eastward or northward as had been expected there was much dissatisfaction and Ney actually refused to obey him and announced his intention to march on Almeida! Masséna thereupon ordered Ney to return to France and gave the command of the VIth Corps to Loison. Ney's departure was bitterly resented by the VIth Corps and hardly had this matter been settled when d'Erlon who had all along chafed at losing his independent command did what Ney had threatened to do with the VIth Corps and actually marched with one of his Divisions on Almeida, recalling the other from Guarda!

Masséna however had the courage of his opinions and prepared for his proposed march, sending his sick and wounded and a proportion of his artillery to Almeida and keeping only six guns with each Division. He ordered d'Erlon to halt at Val de la Mula so as to act as a covering force in case Wellington should attack Almeida. Reynier halted at Guarda with the IInd Corps for two days and then moved on Penamacor. Junot arrived at Guarda next day and finding that the roads, or rather tracks, leading from it were extremely rough and unsuited for wheeled transport, he left his guns there and marched on Belmonte. The VIth Corps reached Guarda on the 26th and Masséna himself

arrived there on the following day. On this day Junot was held up at Belmonte for want of food and Reynier wrote to report a similar condition of things and further, that the Tagus ahead of him was impassable. D'Erlon at Almeida also reported a precarious condition of affairs on the frontier; so Masséna was obliged to abandon his insane project and retreat on Ciudad Rodrigo. He ordered Reynier to march to Sabugal which he was to hold until Junot had withdrawn past him; Loison with the VIth Corps covering the retirement at Guarda. Such, in broad outline were Masséna's movements between 22 and 29 March.

When on the 24th the British cavalry in pursuit of Masséna reached Celorico they were not long in discovering his sudden move on Guarda and of d'Erlon's on Almeida. The following day Wellington received some supplies at Celorico, and on the next it was reported that the main French force was moving on Guarda. The Light Division reached Celorico only on the 26th. Owing to the lack of supplies it had been compelled to make very short marches; only one ration of bread was issued in the preceding four days and the country had been literally stripped of everything by the retiring French. Wellington was still uncertain of Masséna's plans and halted at Celorico until the 28th when the Light Division was ordered to cross the Mondego and occupy Baracal and Minhocal, detaching a wing of the Rifles to join the advanced cavalry post at Alverca.

On the 25th the Light Division received a welcome reinforcement, the 2nd Battalion of the 52nd Light Infantry which had recently arrived from England, joining Drummond's Brigade.¹

On this day Captain Charles Beckwith with 100 Riflemen was sent to dislodge a party of the enemy from a windmill in front of Freixedas, where they were grinding flour whilst another party were busily employed

¹ This Battalion landed at Lisbon from England on 6 March 1811 and joined the Light Division on 25 March. *History of the 52nd*, Moorsom, p. 135.

baking bread in the town beyond. The French were quickly driven from the mill and twenty prisoners captured. Lieutenant James Stewart the Adjutant of the Rifles who was acting as Brigade-Major to Colonel Beckwith, pressed on with a few Riflemen into the village and was shot dead by some French soldiers who fired from a window at close range. He was a very great loss to the Regiment which he had joined in 1804. Leach says of him "No man in any corps ever filled the situation of adjutant better than he did, and very few half so well. He was open-hearted, manly, friendly and independent, a most gallant and zealous officer and much devoted to his own corps . . . By the soldiers he was idolized and very justly."¹ It will be recalled how he had been mentioned in despatches by Wellington for his conduct at the fight of Barba del Puerco, over a year earlier and specially noted for promotion. At dawn on the morning after the affair of Freixedas his body wrapped in his cloak and deposited in a chest was buried in the village of Alverca in front of Beckwith's quarters in presence of the whole of the advance-guard, Riflemen, Hussars and Artillery, after which they moved off after the enemy towards Guarda followed by the main body of the Light Division. Meanwhile, Picton who had stopped on the 28th with the 3rd Division, closed on Guarda from the west, the 6th Division advancing in the interval between the 3rd and the Light Division, Loison, who as we have seen, had succeeded Ney, had Marchand's and Mermet's Divisions at Guarda and was in the act of withdrawing Férey's, when Picton's advanced troops appeared. The Light Division meanwhile was in sight north of the town and Loison withdrew precipitately towards Sabugal. There seems to be little doubt that had the Light Division been more vigorously thrown forward, the French would have suffered severely. As it was, only the cavalry and Horse Artillery were able to overtake them which they did capturing over 200 prisoners. On the following day our cavalry followed up the

¹ *Rough Sketches*, p. 204.

pursuit but did not show much enterprise¹ and Loison got away and crossed the Coa about eight miles north of Sabugal. Reynier was already on the Coa at Sabugal and on the 31st Junot, whose dangerous position at Belmonte was, luckily for him, unknown to Wellington, made good his retirement and halted at Alfayates in rear of Reynier.

The Light Division on the 29th had halted for supplies at Carapeta and some other villages below Guarda. Guarda stands about 3,430 feet above the sea in the highest part of the Serra da Estrella, and is said to be the highest inhabited town in Portugal. Our officers visited it on the following day and found that the fine old Church "had been converted by the French into a stable and the organ sadly cut and hacked about in the most wanton manner (by *Catholics*)"!² An unfortunate woman lay murdered in one of the streets with a huge piece of granite taken from the market cross, which it took seven men to remove, placed on her bosom. On 1 April they marched in heavy rain to Pega and halted at Quintas de San Bartolomeo on the bank of the Coa opposite to Sabugal which town was held by Reynier's Corps with his sentries on the British side of the Coa, here a small stream fordable at many points but none the less an awkward military obstacle owing to its steep and wooded banks. The Rifles found the line of piquets; the night was extremely dark with heavy rain, so dark that one of our sentries when on his beat unintentionally closed on the French piquet and was there found by Kincaid when he went on his visiting rounds. Next day the Rifles were moved to the right nearer the bridge of Sabugal and there was some slight skirmishing between them and the French advanced posts.

Wellington decided to attack Reynier at Sabugal with all his force and during the 1st and 2nd April he closed up his Divisions. His plan was for the 6th Division to feint against Loison on the Coa

¹ Tomkinson, *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, p. 91.

² Simmons, p. 160.

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some miles north of Sabugal whilst the 5th moved against that town and the 3rd Division crossed the Coa a mile above it. Meanwhile the Light Division and the cavalry brigades were to cross the river some miles south of Sabugal and turn the French left and cut off their retreat on Alfayates. The 1st and newly formed 7th Division were to act in support of the 3rd and 5th Divisions.

ACTION OF SABUGAL.

3 April, 1811.

On the morning of 3 April there was so heavy a fog, that Picton and the Commander of the 5th Division decided not to move without further orders. Erskine however had no such qualms and ordered the Light Division to advance. Beckwith's Brigade on nearing the Coa, as the fog was dense, halted and awaited for further orders. Erskine sent word for him to advance at once which he did and missing his direction in the fog struck the river a mile below the ford assigned to him. The other brigade of the Light Division made the same mistake, as did the cavalry, which crossed two miles nearer to Sabugal than Wellington had ordered. The 95th led off the advance with a line of skirmishers composed of the four Companies under Gilmour with Beckwith's Brigade. On reaching the Coa they dropped down its steep banks and forded the stream up to the armpits. The French piquets fired a few shots and fell back from the river. Once over the river the skirmishers inclining to the left advanced in pursuit of the piquets across gently rising ground, mostly open save for a few stone walls, and suddenly came upon a French regiment and had to fall back until the 43rd¹ came up, when they drove the enemy "through some fine groves of big chestnut trees" upon their main body. Owing to the rain and

¹ Wellington in his despatches mentions the 3rd Caçadores as having been with Beckwith, but in none of the Regimental accounts are they mentioned and both Napier and Fergusson of the 43rd, say they were absent.

fog it was difficult to make out the enemy's position but it was found that Beckwith's attack had struck the left regiment of Merle's left Brigade in front instead of working round the flank as designed. Merle's other Brigade was rapidly performing a "change of front, left back" to meet the British attack.

At this critical moment another French Brigade, one of Heudelet's, was descried through the mist at a distance moving towards Beckwith's right flank. Captain Hopkins of the 43rd who commanded the flank Company of that Regiment at once dashed forward and seized a knoll about half a mile in advance and upon the French detaching a force to dislodge him drove them back with great gallantry. Meanwhile Beckwith pushed forward through the chestnut trees and reached the spur of the heights which had formed the flank of the original French position only to see in front of him Sarrut's Brigade of six battalions. The mist cleared a little and Beckwith found himself almost in the French position and opposed to over double his numbers. A very heavy rain-storm now came on and as usual seriously affected the rapidity of fire from the flint-locks and Beckwith was driven back to a lower spur of the hill where he held on to some old walls, whence the Riflemen had driven Merle's skirmishers earlier in the action. This retirement brought him somewhat nearer to Hopkins's company. The French now opened fire from two howitzers with both round and grape-shot whilst their *tirailleurs* pressed on and gained the cover of a wall whence they delivered a sharp musketry fire on our men. Soon, through the mist appeared three columns of Frenchmen advancing quickly "with drums beating and the officers dancing like madmen with their hats frequently hoisted upon their swords."¹ They were met by a terrible fire and driven back with heavy loss, the 95th and 43rd suffering but little owing to their formation whereas the dense column of the French offered an easy target.

¹ Simmons, p. 162.

Shattered by this fire, for the rain having stopped, the rifles and muskets once again had become effective, the French fell back up the slope. Thereupon Beckwith had the temerity to renew his attack and to charge again and reaching a French battery, the 43rd captured a howitzer. About this time he was attacked on his left by French infantry whilst two squadrons of cavalry under Pierre Soult charged him on the right. Beckwith now fell back and it was only by sheer hard fighting amid the broken walls and enclosures which offered some degree of protection that he was able to hold his ground. The howitzer, abandoned, lay in the open between the contending forces and repeated efforts were made by both parties to obtain possession of it but the fire was too severe. Things were most critical when most fortunately the other Brigade of the Light Division, Drummond's, came up on Beckwith's right-rear. This brigade although it had wandered somewhat in the mist had taken the route arranged for it and reached the left rear of the original French position very much as ordered. Hearing the firing, Drummond altered his line of advance and brought up his Brigade on the¹ right of Beckwith's and advanced firing with the Companies of the 95th and 1st Caçadores and 1st Battalion 52nd deployed in line with the 2nd Battalion 52nd in reserve. The French thereupon fell back and the two Brigades of the Light Division continued the advance. The heights were gained and the howitzer re-captured whether by the 43rd or 52nd is one of those vexed points in history about which even eye-witnesses differ !²

The heights gained, the struggle was renewed and Merle received reinforcements in the shape of the 2nd Brigade of Heudelet's Division

¹ Oman, vol. iv, p. 194, records the interesting fact that Erskine sent an order to Drummond "not to engage." Drummond very properly ignored the order and probably saved Beckwith thereby.

² The "Sabugal howitzer" gave rise to a lively correspondence for many years. Thirty years after its capture the Duke of Wellington was asked to decide the question but declined to give an opinion.

(seven battalions) which attacked Beckwith's left flank whilst a second cavalry charge was made by the French against Drummond's right. This charge a squadron of the 16th Light Dragoons drove off. The mist now lifted and discovered the Light Division on the heights across the river almost surrounded by a greatly stronger force which certainly outnumbered it in a proportion of five to three. But Picton's 3rd Division was on the river bank ready to cross, opposite to what had earlier in the day been the French centre and which was now unoccupied whilst the 5th Division was about to cross at Sabugal now defended by a solitary French brigade. Reynier quickly saw the danger of his position and ordered this brigade to fall back towards Alfayates and hold a position a mile in rear, Heudelet's other Brigade to hold the Light Division and check their advance as long as possible. Picton, having crossed the river now arrived in hot haste and with the 5th Regiment delivered a furious charge on the flank of Heudelet's Brigade and overthrew it. Picton pursued the flying French but the rain became absolutely blinding and eventually Wellington ordered a halt. The British cavalry under Erskine did nothing, but the King's German Hussars captured some baggage, including Reynier's and Pierre Soult's. It will be recalled that our Riflemen had captured this unlucky officer's baggage at Pombal only about three weeks earlier. The total British and Portuguese losses in this very sharp affair were only 179. Of these the Light Division lost 142, the 3rd Division (Picton) losing only 25 in their brief attack.

The 43rd which was so closely engaged throughout the day had one officer and seven men killed and eighty casualties altogether, and the 1st Battalion of the 52nd had twenty-three casualties. The 1st Battalion of the Rifles lost one officer, the Hon. Duncan Arbuthnot and one man killed and two officers, Colonel Beckwith and 2nd Lieutenant William Haggup and twelve men wounded. The Company of the 2nd Battalion present lost one killed and two wounded. The French

loss was sixty-one officers and 689 men.¹ This heavy percentage of officers was probably due to the gallantry of the French officers in bringing up their men repeatedly to the attack as described by Simmons. The comparatively small losses of the four Companies of the 1st Battalion give a good example of the methods and training of our Riflemen at this time when employed in ground favourable for their fighting in extended order.

The hero of the fight was undoubtedly Colonel Sidney Beckwith, whose horse was shot. Of him Leach says "he possessed the cool courage which can look calmly at danger and adopt measures to meet it, under the most critical and appalling circumstances." Kincaid who took part in the fight is eloquent on Beckwith's value as a commander "he was just the man to grapple with any odds, being in his single person a host—of a tall commanding figure and noble countenance—with a soul equal to his appearance" he was as Napier says "a man equal to rally an army in flight." Describing "the successive and desperate encounters" on the hillside on that eventful day Kincaid writes "Beckwith was the life and soul of the fray ; he had been the successful leader of those who were then around him in many a bloody field and his calm clear commanding voice was distinctly heard amid the roar of battle, and cheerfully obeyed. He had but single companies to oppose to the enemy's battalions, but strange as it may appear I saw him twice lead successful charges with but two companies of the 43rd against an advancing mass of the enemy. His front, it is true was equal to theirs and such was his daring and such the confidence of those hardy soldiers in him that they went as fiercely to work single-handed as if the whole army had been at their heels."

Kincaid on this day was probably acting Brigade-Major to Beckwith in place of the gallant James Stewart who fell at Freixeda five

¹ Oman, vol. iv, p. 197 and Appendix vi. The French losses are taken from French returns.

days earlier, for he was evidently close to him throughout the action. He tells us how "Beckwith's manner of command on these occasions was nothing more than a familiar sort of conversation with the soldier. To give an idea of it, in the last charge I saw him make with two companies of the 43rd, he found himself at once opposed to a fresh column in front and others advancing on both flanks, and seeing the necessity for immediate retreat he called out 'Now my lads we'll just go back a little if you please.' On hearing which every man began to run, when he shouted again 'No! No, I don't mean that—we are in no hurry—we'll just walk quietly back, and you can give them a shot as we go along.' This was quite enough and was obeyed to the letter—the retiring force keeping up a destructive fire and regulating their movements by his, as he rode quietly back in the midst of them, conversing aloud in a cheerful encouraging manner. . . . A musket ball had in the meantime shaved his forehead and the blood was streaming down his countenance. . . . As soon as we got a little way up the face of our hill he called out 'Now my lads this will do—let us show them our teeth again.' This was obeyed as steadily as if the words, halt, front, had been given on parade, and our line was instantly in battle array, whilst Beckwith, shaking his fist in the faces of the advancing foe called out to them 'Now you rascals come on here if you dare.' Those he addressed showed no want of courage but for a while came on boldly to the tune of '*old trousers*,'¹ notwithstanding

¹ *Random Shots*, pp. 165-9. Most readers probably will be perplexed at this expression. Kincaid in a footnote explains "'Old trousers' was the name given by our soldiers to the point of war which is beat by the French drummers in advancing to the charge" and adds "I have, when skirmishing in a wood, often heard the drum long before we saw them, and, on those occasions, our Riflemen immediately began calling out to each other 'Holloa there! look sharp! for damn me, but here comes old trousers!'"

The origin of the expression puzzled me for many years. I came across it now and again in old papers and letters dealing with the Peninsula. However one day it occurred to me that the clue lay in the words of the famous old song "the Tow-

the fearful havoc we were making in their ranks, but they could not screw themselves up the long disputed hill—the 52nd (two battalions) had by this time come into the line of battle and were plying them hard on the right whilst our rifles were peppering them on their front and left, and, as soon as they came near enough, another dash by Beckwith, at the head of the 43rd, gave them the *coup de grâce*.”

It is characteristic of Beckwith that he always maintained in after years that, so far as it was possible for a man in command of one company to decide an action, Captain Hopkins of the 43rd had decided the Action of Sabugal.¹

The British cavalry was badly handled by Sir William Erskine on this day and effected nothing. Considerable dissatisfaction was felt in the Light Division at his conduct of the fight from first to last. Luckily the mist prevented him from seeing how his orders were ignored.²

After the fight the rain fell more furiously than ever and Wellington rode up to the Light Division and as a compliment for their exertions in this fight ordered them into the town of Sabugal where they arrived only just in time to prevent the 5th Division occupying the place, much to the annoyance of the latter.

Wellington in his despatches wrote as follows :—

“I consider the action that was fought by the Light Division, by Colonel Beckwith’s Brigade principally, with the whole of the IIInd Corps, to be one of the most glorious that British troops were ever engaged in.

row-row of the British Grenadiers.” Thus the French drummers who sounded their “*point of war*” with “tow-row-rows” were dubbed by our men “Old tow-rows-ers” which was orally rendered “old tow-rowers” or “old trowsers.” I shall be glad if a better derivation can be suggested. Moorsom in his *History of the 52nd* (p. 139) and Costello in his *Adventures* (p. 28) both mention the expression.

¹ Levinge, *History of the 43rd*, p. 150.

² In the old copy of *Random Shots* already alluded to, all the portion dealing with Beckwith is deeply underlined and annotated, evidently with high approval. That dealing with Erskine is curtly and rudely marked “Ass-skin and Co.” Our Peninsular fighters were eminently plain-spoken men.

"The 43rd Regiment under Major Patrickson particularly distinguished themselves, as did that part of the 95th Regiment in Colonel Beckwith's Brigade, under the command of Major Gilmour and Colonel Elder's Caçadores. The 1st Battalion 52nd Regiment under the command of Colonel Ross likewise showed great steadiness and gallantry when they joined Colonel Beckwith's Brigade.

"Throughout the action the troops received great advantage from the assistance of the two guns of Captain Bull's Troop of Horse Artillery which crossed at the ford with the Light Division and came up to their support. It was impossible for any officer to conduct himself with more ability and gallantry than Colonel Beckwith. I had also great reason to be satisfied with the conduct of Colonel Drummond who commanded the other Brigade of the Light Division " ¹

Sir William Cope describes an amusing incident during the advance of the Riflemen which he heard old Officers of the Regiment mention when he was serving in the 1st Battalion. Whilst our Riflemen after crossing the river were driving the enemy's skirmishers through a chestnut wood, a man of the 1st Battalion of the name of Flinn was aiming at a Frenchman when a hare started out of the fern with which the hill was covered. Flinn leaving the Frenchman, covered the hare and fired and killed his game. On the officer commanding the Company remonstrating with him, his reply was "Ah ! your honour, sure we can kill a Frenchman any day ; but it isn't always I can bag a hare for your supper." ²

On the evening of the fight at Sabugal Masséna was at Alfayates with the IInd, VIth and VIIIth Corps. Next day Reynier marched to Gallegos, Junot to Carpio and Marialva and Loison towards Ciudad Rodrigo whilst d'Erlon withdrew behind Almeida.

On the morning of the 4th the Light Division marched to

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 9 April 1811.

² Fitz Maurice, *Recollections of a Rifleman's Wife*, p. 178.

Quadrazaes and on to the frontier village of Forcalhos and the 3rd Division was at Alfayates. On the 5th the Light Division was at Albergueria with the other Divisions in rear.

See Map
"Lisbon to
Valladolid"
at end of
volume

Masséna having left a garrison of 1,200 men to hold Almeida under General Brennier fell back on Ciudad Rodrigo. Trant's Portuguese made a bold attempt on the 7th to cut the French communications between Almeida and Rodrigo and were sharply engaged. Reynier now retired and during the next few days the whole French army withdrew behind the Agueda and marched on Salamanca, fifty miles into Spain. By the middle of April the VIth Corps was cantoned about Salamanca and Alba de Tormes, the IIInd about Ledesma and the VIIIth was at Toro. The French line of outposts consisting of two divisions under d'Erlon was near San Munoz. Wellington halted at the frontier since his further advance was barred by the fortresses of Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo and his siege-train was still on board-ship in the Tagus. He however disposed troops to blockade Almeida. On the 9th the Light Division took up the old outpost line on the Agueda occupying the villages of Gallegos, Espeja and Fuentes de Oñoro, with advanced posts along the Azava. All ranks were much pleased to be once again in Spain for, added to the gratification of having driven their formidable enemy out of Portugal, was the feeling that they had left behind them the dirt and discomfort of that country. The remarkable difference between the cleanliness of the peasantry, both in their persons and their dwellings, of the two countries is remarked on in many of the diaries. Kincaid thus neatly sums up the situation "Passing from the Portuguese to the Spanish frontier is about equal to taking one step from the coal-hole into the parlour."

Simmons expatiates on the more material joys of having at last "something comfortable to eat and a good mattress to sleep upon."

CHAPTER XII.

FUENTES DE OÑORO, 1811.

Blockade of Almeida—Affair at the Bridge of Marialva—Masséna's impending advance—Wellington decides to oppose him at Fuentes de Oñoro—Description of the village and position—Fuentes d'Onor *versus* Fuentes de Oñoro—Strength of the opposing Forces—Masséna crosses the Agueda—The Light Division driven back—Wellington's dispositions—The Light Division retires through Fuentes de Oñoro—Combat of 3 May—Masséna's reconnaissance on the 4th—His plan of attack for the 5th—Wellington's revised dispositions—Craufurd returns to the Army—Cordial welcome by the Light Division—Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro—The French cavalry seize Nave d'Haver—British driven out of Poço Velho—The 7th Division in retreat—Arrival of the Light Division—Riflemen hold the wood at Poço Velho—The Light Division covers the retreat of 7th Division—The French cavalry attempt to overwhelm the British right—Craufurd's masterly retreat across open country—Splendid aid given by British cavalry—Norman Ramsay's exploit—The Light Division joins Wellington's new line—Renewed French attacks with infantry and cavalry driven off.—Masséna's attack on Fuentes de Oñoro—Heavy fighting in the village—Final victory of the British—End of the Battle—Beckwith's Brigade holds the village at nightfall—The Rifles and 9th *Léger* meet on the bridge—Interview with French officers—Losses in the Battle—Masséna withdraws behind the Agueda—The French destroy Almeida—Escape of General Brennier and his garrison—Masséna is superseded by Marmont—The Light Division once again on the Azava.

DURING the remainder of the month of April 1811 the Light Division continued in its old quarters, watching the line of the Agueda and Azava in front of the blockaded fortress of Almeida. On 10 April Captain Cameron with three officers and 150 Riflemen were sent to the village of San Pedro about five miles south-east of Almeida. The next morning before daylight the Riflemen supported by a company of the 52nd worked up close to the fortress and

See
Map XX,
p. 298.

endeavoured to shoot the cattle and sheep which were grazing on the glacis, obliging the French to drive them in under cover of their outworks. At nightfall the party returned to San Pedro. On the four following days the same service was carried out, the French firing their heavy guns at our men who were scattered among the rocks. The Rifles lost Sergeant M'Donald killed and some men wounded. "It was a very unpleasant service attended with more risk than profit" writes Simmons, adding "If we had been able to obtain a sirloin of beef occasionally it would have been well enough."

On the 16th the Light Division marched through Gallegos and took post behind the heights near Molino dos Flores in the expectation of intercepting a convoy from Salamanca to Rodrigo, but failed to do so. The convoy escorted by 300 infantry duly arrived and being threatened by our cavalry shut itself up in some old walled enclosures. A couple of guns from the Light Division would have settled the matter. As it was our cavalry could not dislodge them and eventually the French sent out infantry from Rodrigo and released them.¹ It was a sorry performance and caused much vexation in the Light Division.

On the 23rd a squadron of French cavalry with two infantry battalions advanced by Carpio to the heights above Marialva on the Azava. The 52nd had a piquet at the bridge and defended it with spirit; soon a second company of the 52nd and some of the Rifles came up and the French were driven back towards Rodrigo. It was a sharp affair and the conduct of those of the Light Division present met with high approval from Wellington who in his despatch mentioned Lieutenant Charles Eeles of the 95th as having distinguished himself.²

On the 27th Beckwith's Brigade marched from the villages of

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 184.

² *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool 1 May 1811.

Sexmeiro, Barquilla and Villar de Puerco to the rear of Gallegos, Drummond's Brigade being posted in front of Almeida.

On the 28th Wellington returned from a hurried visit to Badajoz and received news that some French troops had been pushed forward to El Bodon. He had heard on the previous day that Masséna had advanced with the VIth and VIIIth Corps to Ciudad Rodrigo and it was obvious that he was about to attempt to relieve Almeida.

Wellington's return was a matter of great rejoicing, for all ranks of the army had implicit confidence in him. Kincaid puts the general feeling forcibly, if somewhat personally, "we would rather see his long nose in a fight than a reinforcement of ten thousand men any day."

Wellington decided to oppose Masséna's impending advance by holding a position on a long low ridge south of Almeida in rear of the river Dos Casas with his left near Fort Concepción and his right in the village of Fuentes de Oñoro,¹ a distance of over seven miles. Fuentes de Oñoro lies on the western side of the Dos Casas occupying a front of some 1,200 yards. Its houses and walled gardens are hidden from view by the gently rising ground in front of it, the church which stands at the top of the village on the hill behind, alone being visible as one approaches it from the east. The stream here is fordable at many places and runs in a shallow valley, but below the village this valley rapidly deepens, the banks being steep and rocky, until eight miles

See
Map XIX,
p. 282.

¹ Although the "Battle Honour" carried by the British Army on its Colours and Appointments is spelt "Fuentes d'Onor" I have adopted the correct Spanish spelling "Fuentes de Oñoro" meaning "the springs (or sources) of Oñoro," the latter being a proper name and *not* the Spanish for "Honour" which according to many accounts both French and British officers assumed it to be! Since there is no "d'" in the Spanish language I presume that "Fuentes d'Onor" is the Portuguese rendering. Here it may be remarked that a large number of the villages, rivers etc. along the Spanish-Portuguese frontiers have names in both languages, with variations in each, hence it is difficult to decide what is correct. Whenever there seems to be a reasonable doubt I have adopted the spelling shown on some modern map and generally accepted.

below at Val de la Mula it becomes a rugged ravine over 150 feet in depth. Almost parallel to the Dos Casas and less than two miles in rear of it runs the Turones river fordable at many places, whilst another four miles in rear of the Turones is the Coa only passable here by the bridge at Castello Bom.

Some five miles south of Fuentes just across the frontier is the small hamlet of Nave d'Haver easily identified by means of a conical hill near it, whilst half way between that point and Fuentes is the small frontier village of Poço Velho of the Portuguese maps and Pozo Bello of the Spanish. Several small springs rise in some swampy ground near Nave d'Haver which uniting and gathering volume serve to form the Dos Casas stream. At Poço Velho there is a second swampy area.

From the foregoing it will be seen that Wellington had little to fear for his left owing to the great natural strength on that flank, whereas the open nature of the country south of him made a turning movement on Masséna's part against his right a matter to be carefully guarded against and the more so since it would threaten his line of retreat across the Coa. As a precautionary measure he got Julian Sanchez, the guerrilla leader, to occupy Nave d'Haver with his motley band. To hold this position along the Dos Casas Wellington had the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th and newly arrived 7th Division, also the Light Division and a Cavalry Division of three weak Brigades under Sir Stapleton Cotton. His total force amounted to about 34,000 infantry of which 23,000 were British, and 1,850 cavalry with 48 guns, half British and half Portuguese.

Masséna since his retirement on Salamanca had not been idle. He had worked hard to reorganize, refit and equip his army and had obtained some small reinforcements from Marshal Bessières who commanded the district north of Salamanca. On 1 May his total available force was over 47,000, of which 4,500 were cavalry, with 38 guns and included the IInd, VIth, VIIIth and IXth Corps.

At this time of the year the Agueda was still generally unfordable. At Sexmeiro the ford was guarded by a strong French piquet. On 1 May our Riflemen on the outpost line saw six squadrons of cavalry and a French infantry column on the heights of Carpio and Marialva but these withdrew some hours later. On 2 May Beckwith's Brigade was at Espeja; on this day a French force of all arms crossed the Agueda by the bridge at Ciudad Rodrigo and moving in two columns advanced, the right column on Marialva the left on Espeja.

Drummond's Brigade now joined Beckwith's and the whole Light Division fell back slowly before the French for about three miles, now and again turning to show their teeth and formed up in a big wood between Espeja and the Dos Casas in line of columns with the cavalry covering their front. It was a delicate operation, for the country was much wooded and favourable for cavalry surprise but our Riflemen and the Light Infantry aided by the handful of British horse available carried out the retirement steadily and without loss. Here they bivouacked for the night. On the 3rd Masséna continued his advance in three columns, the right column moving on Alameda; following his force was a big convoy for Almeida. Owing to his great superiority in cavalry the British outposts were quickly driven in and the Light Division retired through the village of Fuentes de Oñoro which they found held by the 1st and 3rd Divisions. The 7th Division was on the right and the 6th on the left with the 5th beyond it on the extreme left, south of Fort Concepción. The Light Division marched through the village and was posted in reserve "as a flying corps ready to be despatched to any point in this extended position, most menaced."¹ From this position a good view of all the country to the front is obtainable and Simmons notes "we overlooked the villages and adjacent country where we observed the enemy moving into position and advancing towards us

¹ Leach, *Rough Sketches*, p. 221.

along the same tracks we had a few hours before been passing over." The British cavalry was posted on the right-rear of the line.

COMBAT OF FUENTES DE OÑORO.

3 May, 1811.

See
Map XIX,
p. 282.

Fuentes de Oñoro was held by the light companies of the 1st and 3rd Divisions. Some time after 2 p.m. Masséna ordered Férey's Division of the VIth Corps (Loison's) to attack the village whilst the IIInd Corps (Reynier's) made a feint movement against the British left near Fort Concepción. Férey's first attack on the village was made with one of his brigades with great vigour, and the British were driven back from the outskirts of the village to the church and the walls about it. The British now made a counter-attack and regained their former position. Férey renewed the attack and once again the British had to fall back. Wellington now sent the 71st supported by the 79th and 24th to reinforce the hard-pressed light companies. The 71st made a fine charge and drove back the enemy and the British once again cleared the village and pushed across the river to the plain beyond until held up by the French horsemen. Four battalions from Marchand's Division of Loison's Corps now attacked and succeeded in occupying some buildings on the east of the stream but could not cross it. Fighting continued after dark but about 10 o'clock it died down and both sides proceeded to remove their dead and wounded. The remainder of the night passed quietly. The losses had been considerable on both sides, the British casualties being 259 and the French 652, over 160 being taken prisoners.

The Company of the 3rd Battalion which was attached to Howard's Brigade was engaged all this day in resisting the furious attacks of the French on the village. Lieutenant Uniacke and nine

of our Riflemen were wounded. The Light Division was not engaged on this day. In consequence of Reynier's threatened attack it was sent towards evening in great haste to reinforce the left flank, and it was halted when about four miles north of Fuentes. At nightfall it was drawn in over a mile nearer to that village and bivouacked.

Early next morning, the 4th, there was a sharp interchange of fire between the British troops holding the village and the French ensconced in the buildings and broken ground across the stream, but no attempt was made to renew the attack and the fire died down in a few hours. Masséna had no doubt become aware that Fuentes was too strong a place to be taken by direct attack and so ordered a reconnaissance southward to find out what prospect there was of turning Wellington's right; he evidently had come to the conclusion that the British left, behind the ravine near Fort Concepción, was too strong to be meddled with. Montbrun in consequence was sent southward with a considerable force of cavalry and soon reported that Wellington's extreme right rested on Nave d'Haver which was only held by a small Spanish force; also that although the country was marshy and wooded in places, it was generally favourable for the employment of cavalry. Masséna thereupon decided to attack on the following day. His general plan was to move troops under cover of darkness to the south so as to turn Wellington's right and when this movement developed to make a vigorous assault on Fuentes and break in on the British centre; Reynier meanwhile was to threaten the extreme British left. We will now see how he carried out this scheme. Under cover of darkness three Divisions, Marchand's and Mermet's of the VIth Corps, supported by Solignac's of the VIIIth Corps, altogether some 17,000 infantry, were ordered to march to a point in front of Poço Velho. At daylight they were to attack; whilst four brigades of cavalry, 3,500 strong, worked round the Spanish troops on the extreme south at Nave

d'Haver and enveloped the British right. Férey's Division opposite to Fuentes was to form up before daylight as if about to attack, whilst d'Erlon's two Divisions were to be drawn up in rear in two lines widely spaced so that they might be taken for Loison's VIth Corps still holding the ground where it stood on the 3rd. Reynier's orders were to threaten the British left and, if it moved, to follow up and attack it.

Wellington, no doubt noticing Montbrun's southward movement on the 4th, sent as a precautionary measure the 7th Division to the hill at Poço Velho so as to guard the passage of the Dos Casas. He thus was extended along a front of no less than twelve miles including of course the gap of two miles between Fuentes and Poço Velho. He ordered the 71st and 79th with the 24th in support to hold the village of Fuentes de Oñoro. After sunset the Light Division was ordered to return from the left to its original position in rear of the right centre.

On this same day, when the prospect of a severe general action on the morrow was obvious to all, by a stroke of good fortune Robert Craufurd suddenly arrived and once again took command of the Light Division. It was three months almost to the day since he had left it in front of Santarem. Some time before his departure the feelings of dislike and fear with which he had inspired so many of his Division had shown signs of abating, save indeed among some of his officers who, as is not uncommonly the case in campaigns, were distrustful of the "higher leading." These men could not forget the Coa, Barquilla and other unfortunate affairs. The rank and file however had long since found out that the famous "orders for marches" had been framed for their benefit and not to harass them. Added to this, and here came a point which appealed to every officer as well as to the men, they had recently taken part in a series of minor actions culminating in the brilliant fight at Sabugal, where they had repeatedly had bitter experience of the lack of good and intelligent leading on the part of their Divi-

sional commander and had suffered in consequence. Possibly there were occasions when the luckless leader was blamed for things beyond his control but every mishap was set down to the absence of Craufurd. Thus his reappearance was the source of immense satisfaction to the Light Division. Costello who at the time was a Sergeant in the 2nd Battalion says "General Craufurd made his reappearance amongst us from England and was welcomed with much enthusiasm by the Division ; although a strict disciplinarian the men knew his value in the field too well not to testify their satisfaction at his return. The Caçadores, particularly, caused much laughter among us by shouting out in Portuguese 'Long live General Craufurd who takes care of our bellies' meaning by this exclamation they got their rations regularly while under his command. The general seemed highly pleased and bowed repeatedly with his hat off as he rode down the ranks."¹

It may be mentioned here that the 7th Division under General Houston at this time was far from being a powerful fighting unit like the others. It had only one British brigade composed of two weak battalions, the 51st and 85th and two foreign corps, the Chasseurs Britanniques and the Brunswick Oël's the second brigade consisting of three Portuguese regiments, the whole Division numbering only 4,000 infantry. These details are necessary since without them the arduous nature of the task which fell to the lot of the Light Division on the following day cannot be rightly appreciated.

BATTLE OF FUENTES DE OÑORO.

5 May, 1811.

Wellington detected the march of Solignac's Division as well as of a large force of cavalry southward very early on the 5th and at once ordered Cotton with his cavalry, about 1,400 strong, and Bull's

¹ Costello, *Adventures of a Soldier*, p. 79.

battery of Horse Artillery, together with the Light Division, to his right to support Houston. The 1st and 3rd Divisions were also ordered to move towards the right. The fight began with some French cavalry attacking the British infantry outposts in the scattered wood and scrub at Poço Velho where were two of Houston's battalions and driving them in. About the same time a French cavalry brigade moved on Nave d'Haver which was promptly abandoned without opposition by Julian Sanchez's men. Two squadrons of the 14th Light Dragoons now most gallantly attempted to stem the advance of the French cavalry but were driven back by very superior numbers and retired on Poço Velho where the French pursuit was checked by infantry fire from the wood. A squadron of the 16th Light Dragoons and another of the German Hussars were about the same time attacked by superior numbers and driven in on to Poço Velho with loss. Marchand's Division followed by Mermet's, both moving in column of double-companies, now debouched from behind the hill at Nave d'Haver and, inclining to the right moved almost north against Poço Velho and thrusting back Houston's skirmishing line pushed on through the wood and stormed the village. The British infantry falling back in disorder were assailed by a French cavalry regiment and lost over 150 killed, wounded and prisoners. Help was however at hand for the German Hussars moved up on their right flank and thus protected they withdrew to rejoin their Division which was on the plateau nearly a mile distant. The French infantry after their capture of the village now formed in line of columns facing north, thus threatening both Wellington's right flank at Fuentes and also the line of retreat of the 7th Division, whilst Montbrun's cavalry having driven in all opposition both from our sorely outnumbered cavalry and our infantry advanced-posts, showed a formidable mass of regiments to the south-west. But upon the French skirmishers pressing on they were suddenly checked by a sharp rifle fire from the woods north of Poço Velho.

We will now see how our Riflemen came to be at this spot.

The rattling fire of musketry which heralded the French attack on Nave d'Haver caused the Light Division to be rapidly moved along the ridge south of Fuentes towards that point and the Riflemen were extended and thrown into the wood a little to the left and somewhat in front (east) of the 7th Division. They were instantly warmly engaged in a skirmishing fight but owing to the oak trees could see nothing of what was going on to their right (west). Soon, the sound of heavy firing, both musketry and artillery, and the shouts of the charging squadrons told them that there was sharp work in that direction. This was the 7th Division which was almost isolated for a time, when Wellington sent word for it to fall back northward, the Light Division being left to cover the retreat.

Now came an interval of wild fighting which it is almost impossible to unravel since, as is ever the case, every spectator who has left an account of it differs in his sequence of the events. During Houston's withdrawal one of his foreign battalions, the Chasseurs Britanniques, principally composed of renegade Frenchmen, was charged when in line by the enemy's cavalry but it repulsed them in good style. "When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war" so writes Simmons, adding "We were highly amused at the rencontre." Craufurd emerging from the wood, whence he had received orders to withdraw and cover the retreat of the 7th Division, formed his two Brigades in battalion squares; there were seven of them, the 43rd, two of the 52nd, two of the Caçadores and two of the 95th, with Bull's guns in the intervals. Our Riflemen covered this operation and held back the French as long as they could; soon however numbers told and they were driven out of the scrub, the last of them having to run at speed to obtain the shelter of the nearest square—one of the 52nd. The Light Division now fell back slowly followed by the French cavalry ready to pounce upon any square, had the least sign of disorder been detected.

The splendid handling of his Division on this occasion by Craufurd who disposed his squares so as to flank and protect one another has been acknowledged by hundreds of unprejudiced persons (unconnected with the Light Division) who witnessed it from the heights a masterpiece of military evolutions.¹

Craufurd now formed his battalions into close columns of companies ready to form square at any moment and, with our Riflemen extended on his flanks to keep back the French skirmishers, continued his retreat in perfect order across the plain. Marchand's infantry which might have caused Craufurd considerable inconvenience and loss in the close formation he had been compelled to adopt fortunately inclined to their right to attack the British line south of Fuentes de Oñoro. Montbrun who had twelve guns with his big force of cavalry pressed on and opened fire on the seven small squares but happily with small effect. The French horsemen over 3,000 strong surged round them, always keeping at a distance and shouting and gesticulating but never venturing to close on them. The British cavalry and Bull's guns nobly covered the retirement and repeatedly held back the French horse, incurring considerable losses by their hardihood. Mention has been made from time to time of the failure of our cavalry leaders in the Peninsula but the conduct of the handful of British horse at Fuentes de Oñoro in presence of thrice their numbers is good evidence that neither our Regimental Officers nor men were lacking in courage or in determination to close with the enemy, no matter what the odds might be.

It was now that the episode of the "artillery charge" took place. Two of Bull's Horse Artillery guns under Captain Norman Ramsay having remained too long in action were cut off and surrounded by French cavalry. It was then that Ramsay moving at a furious gallop rode right through the astonished French horsemen scattering them like

¹ Leach, *Rough Sketches*, p. 214.

chaff. Captain Brotherton's squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons coming up at the critical moment "shocked" the pursuing French cavalry, and with the aid of a squadron of the Royals drove them off and captured the French Colonel Lamotte and some prisoners. Colonel Charles Stewart, the Adjutant General, led this charge most gallantly. Thanks to this timely diversion, Ramsay was able to regain the shelter of the British force.

No account of Fuentes de Oñoro can be considered complete without quoting Napier's immortal description of Norman Ramsay's exploit.

"Their (the French) troopers were seen closing with disorder and tumult towards one point where a thick dust arose and where loud cries and the sparkling of blades and flashing of pistols indicated some extraordinary occurrence. Suddenly the crowd became violently agitated, an English shout pealed high and clear, the mass was rent asunder, and Norman Ramsay burst forth sword in hand at the head of his battery, his horses breathing fire, stretched like greyhounds along the plain, the guns bounded behind them like things of no weight, and the mounted gunners followed close, with heads bent low and pointed weapons in desperate career."

The British cavalry after this fine feat of arms, in face of the overwhelming advance of the French horsemen, sought the protection of the Light Division. For three miles was this remarkable retirement carried out until Wellington's newly-formed line was reached. As the Regiments of the Light Division approached the position held by the 1st Division, the Guards Brigade wheeled back their companies to let them pass through; this they did and formed up in columns in rear in support. Soon after this they were sent to prolong the British line westward, five companies of the Rifles being posted on the extreme flank with their right thrown back so as to front the Turones valley. A heavy French infantry column came up shortly afterwards and the *voltigeurs* attempted to work round the British flank up the

valley, but were driven back by a vigorous counter-attack made by O'Hare with his five Companies of Riflemen assisted by a light company of the Guards.¹ Wellington commended their action in his despatches.²

The main French column seeing the Light Division posted along a low ridge of broken rocks with a perfectly clear field of fire "against which even a rat could not advance alive," according to Kincaid, fell back. Some of the more venturesome of the French cavalry managed to approach some Guards' skirmishers and cut off about a hundred of them but two squadrons of the Royals and 14th charged and overthrew the French and released the prisoners. The French now opened a heavy cannonade which was replied to by Bull's guns and some field batteries. Later on the Light Division was withdrawn and posted in reserve in rear of the centre.

The result of Wellington's fresh dispositions to defeat Masséna's enveloping attack was to cause the main British force to front south whilst the left remained fronting east. The village of Fuentes de Oñoro was somewhat in advance of the apex of the salient thus formed, not an ideal disposition but the best that could be done in the circumstances in view of Wellington's anxiety to prevent the relief of Almeida at all costs.

Masséna now ordered Férey and d'Erlon with both his Divisions, which it will be recalled had been formed up before daylight in front of Fuentes, to advance and take that village. Between 9 and 10 o'clock Férey attacked in front with one of Claparède's brigades on his left (or south side) and drove the defenders, the 71st and 79th, out of the lower houses towards the church behind. A vigorous counter-attack of the Highlanders and the 24th cleared the village for a time but a second furious attack again drove the British to the upper edge of the village.

¹ John Cox, MS. Journal.

² *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool 8 May 1811.

Wellington now sent up reinforcements from the 1st and 3rd Divisions and the fighting was furious. Presently a heavy column from d'Erlon's Division advanced and in spite of all resistance captured the village and gained the plateau behind it. Here it was exposed to the fire of the British artillery and suffered terribly. At this point General Edward Pakenham, with Wellington's leave, brought up the 88th Connaught Rangers who delivered a furious charge on the leading French Regiment, the 9th *Léger* (whom we last met at Barrosa), and overthrew them. About the same time Mackinnon's Brigade and the 74th and 79th also counter-attacked and a most desperate village fight followed. At one point over 100 French grenadiers fell back down a street of which the exit was barricaded and were all bayoneted. Finally the British prevailed and drove the French out of the village and across the stream; d'Erlon's remaining troops covered the French retreat but made no attempt to renew the attack. The 74th and 88th held the place. For some hours there was a sharp interchange of musketry fire between the light troops of both sides but at nightfall it died down; the battle was over.

During all this furious fight at Fuentes the Light Division had remained in reserve, for Wellington was justly anxious to prevent any fresh attempt of Masséna to attack him from the south. So it came about that in spite of much marching and counter-marching, including the retirement across the open from Poço Velho, it was not hotly engaged on this eventful day. Officers of the Rifles in their journals deplore the fact that the enemy could not be brought to a general action since had this been the case "we should have lived peaceably this summer instead of which we shall be in perpetual hot water."¹

The absolute confidence in themselves and in Wellington is well shown by these words. To fight a general action under Wellington was for the Light Division but to gain another victory and all its

¹ Simmons, p. 181.

benefits. An apt parallel is that of the British bluejacket in Nelson's days who, upon realizing that the enemy's ships declined action is reported to have said : " There goes twenty pounds of my prize money for ever ! "

Sir William Cope gives an interesting example which shows how effective was the Baker rifle in the hands of our men, when holding a defensive position, in *keeping at a distance* the French *voltigeurs*.

" While the battalion were in position near the Turones, and the French infantry which threatened them kept out of rifle range, Flinn, whose sporting propensities at Sabugal I have recorded, was observed to leave the ranks, and with his comrade, advance towards the enemy. The officer in immediate command fancying they were deserting asked the Sergeant of the Company what it meant. ' Oh no sir ' he replied ' they are only gone for some amusement.' Accordingly, ' on nobler game intent ' than the hares at Sabugal, after stopping to drink at the Turones (for the May day was hot) they crept up to the French and taking good aim, brought down each his man. Then putting their caps on their rifles to receive the return fire, while they were well under cover, they deliberately walked back and fell into their places in the Battalion.¹

Whilst the fortunes of the day were being decided in Fuentes de Oñoro Reynier on the extreme British left near Fort Concepción had made several minor attacks which were sharply repulsed by the light troops of the 5th Division. Wellington's left was however secure, for there were two British Divisions guarding it and Masséna realized that his failure to capture Fuentes de Oñoro had made it impossible for him to continue his outflanking attack against Wellington's right. He had therefore definitely failed in his attempt to relieve Almeida.

Shortly before dark Beckwith's Brigade was ordered down into the village to relieve the regiments of the 1st and 3rd Divisions which had

¹ Fitz Maurice, *Recollections of a Rifleman's Wife*, p. 179.

been thrust into the fight and which now all rejoined their respective brigades on the heights behind. The Rifles found the line of piquets along the stream. Opposite to their piquet at the bridge was a piquet of the 9th *Léger* under a captain and close behind it was a heavy column of infantry formed up in rear of a church. At one end of the bridge was posted a couple of our Riflemen and a French double-sentry of two grenadiers stood at the other ; so close were they that they could have easily conversed ! Soon a flag of truce came in asking leave to send an unarmed party into the village to remove the French wounded from the streets and houses. Whilst this was being done three French officers came to the centre of the bridge where they were met by several of our Riflemen including both Leach and Simmons. They were most courteous and discussed the events of the day paying many compliments to the gallant conduct of our army and predicting that the morrow would be a great day and full of glory for one of the two armies.¹

Simmons describes a conversation he had with a French officer who said to him "This place is appropriately named the Fountain of Honour. God knows how many of our friends have drunk deep of its waters and with to-morrow's dawn most likely many of us will do so." Simmons, whose journal abounds with similar pedantic remarks adds "My only reply to this was, 'The fortune of war will decide that, and we are ready to try its chances when our illustrious chief gives us the order to advance.'"² It will be remarked how this French officer also made the popular mistake as to the meaning of the word Oñoro. During the night a Rifleman named Tidy who was by trade a blacksmith, having come across a forge in the village, set to work to shoe some of the officers' horses. A French grenadier seeing the light in the forge crossed the bridge and after asking for a light remained talking with our men. Craufurd, who as usual was ubiquitous, having come down to visit

¹ Leach, *Rough Sketches*, p. 216.

² Simmons, p. 172.

the piquet caught sight of the red epaulette and asked sternly "what the man was doing here" and ordered him to be gone.

Leach tells us that one part of the village was still in the enemy's possession and that it was necessary to use the greatest vigilance throughout the night. Certain is it that both armies expected a renewal of the fight at dawn. The Riflemen were employed throughout the night blocking up certain streets with large stones, levelling walls, digging trenches and making breastworks. West of the village across the plateau to the Turones Wellington caused field-works to be constructed so as to strengthen his front against a renewed attack from the south. Some trenches were also made in rear of Fuentes to guard against a fresh attack from the east.

The losses in this famous action were inconsiderable, only 9 officers and 189 N.C.O.'s and men killed, 59 officers and 971 wounded and 6 officers and 287 men missing, the grand total of the Anglo-Portuguese casualties being 1,522 of all ranks. The total losses of the French were 2,192.¹ The heaviest losses were incurred in the street fighting in Fuentes where the British had 800 and the French nearly 1,300 killed and wounded. The loss in prisoners was mainly among the 7th Division when Poço Velho was taken. The Light Division escaped with very few casualties; the 43rd had only 9, the 52nd 21, the Rifles 19 and the Caçadores 24, a total of only 73. Among the Rifles the 1st Battalion had one sergeant and six men wounded, the 2nd Battalion Company two killed and four wounded and the 3rd Battalion Company (which was with Spencer's Division) had Lieutenant William Westley and one Rifleman killed and two wounded; one sergeant and one man were missing.

At daylight on the 6th our men stood to arms but the French gave no sign of attacking. Kincaid tells us how during the forenoon,

¹ Oman, iv, p. 340.

the French paraded a few prisoners they had taken ; chiefly Guardsmen and Highlanders, whom they marched ostentatiously past the front of our position. The remainder of the day passed in absolute quiet, the French being occupied in collecting their wounded of which cart-loads could be seen moving on the road towards Ciudad Rodrigo. During the 7th and 8th and 9th the same quiet prevailed. Meanwhile Wellington strengthened his field-works and a certain number of the dead were buried but great numbers were left lying about in every direction, these, owing to the hot weather, were soon in a very offensive condition.

Masséna meanwhile had been arranging for his retreat during these seeming days of quiet. The VIth and IXth Corps had fallen back on Ciudad Rodrigo. The IIInd Corps had withdrawn later to San Felices beyond Barba del Puerco bridge and the big convoy of provisions destined for the relief of the garrison of Almeida was easily disposed of by issuing them to the troops.

At dawn on the 10th our Riflemen on piquet at the bridge in Fuentes found that the French infantry outposts had decamped during the night and that there was only a cavalry piquet in front of them. The French had in fact retired all along the line leaving a light screen of cavalry piquets to cover their movement. Our cavalry soon started in pursuit followed closely by the Light Division. Pressing on they shortly came upon strong forces of the French cavalry which kept them in check. Eventually the Light Division halted at their old quarters in Gallegos and Espeja.

And now occurred an untoward event which robbed Wellington of most of the benefit of his recent victory, if indeed it did not almost turn it into a defeat. For Masséna, realizing that he could not save Almeida, on the night of the battle had called for volunteers to send a message to the blockaded fortress to tell the Governor, General Brennier, to blow up the place and endeavour to make his escape. Out of many

who sought the honour three daring soldiers were selected and sent off separately on their dangerous errand; two were taken by the British and being in disguise were promptly shot but the third, *Chasseur* Tillet of the 9th *Léger* (in uniform), got through! At 10 p.m. on the 7th Brennier fired three salvoes to acquaint Masséna that he had received his orders and at once set about carrying them out.¹

Wellington in addition to pushing forward the cavalry and Light Division early on the 10th to take up the line of the Agueda ordered the 6th Division to relieve Pack's Portuguese in the blockade of Almeida and a battalion from the 5th Division to hold the bridge at Barba del Puerco. Campbell who commanded the 6th Division posted his three Brigades in Malpartida, Junça and Cinco Villas and organized a system of outposts to watch every route by which the garrison might attempt to escape. Brennier, having mined the fortress and destroyed his guns, at 11.30 p.m. on the 10th set fire to the trains and marched his whole force out in two columns about 1,400 strong. Owing to a pitiful chapter of accidents, some due to sheer bad luck and others to most incompetent leading, Brennier, although repeatedly attacked, made his way to the bridge of Barba del Puerco and succeeded in crossing it with a loss of only 360 men killed and captured and of his baggage which he was compelled to abandon. Reynier sent down three battalions and some guns to cover his retirement across the river.

Among the various blunders which led to this untoward disaster was the absence of the infantry battalion ordered to hold the bridge. Wellington's order, according to one version, did not reach the colonel of the 4th Regiment in time owing to Erskine having put it in his pocket and forgotten it! Colonel Bevan, the unfortunate officer in command, was so much upset at the censure he incurred that some

¹ Marcel, *Campaignes*, p. 137, and *Notes*.

weeks later he shot himself. It is one of the saddest stories in the whole Peninsular War but is an example of the difficulties which constantly beset Wellington in getting his plans carried out. Writing about it to his brother he said : " I begin to be of the opinion that there is nothing so stupid as 'a gallant officer.'" It is very certain that, although several officers contributed to bring about this disgrace to our arms, all contemporaneous accounts clearly point to Erskine as being the chief culprit.¹ Brennier's exploit was a splendid one and was admitted to be so by his friends and foes. Napoleon on hearing of it at once promoted him to the rank of General of Division.

On the very day that Almeida was thus evacuated and destroyed Masséna was relieved of his command and was succeeded by Marmont who had only reached Rodrigo on the 8th some forty-eight hours before Masséna returned there. Naturally Masséna was very wroth, for there can be no doubt that in spite of his failures he had shown great military talent and skill in keeping together the Army of Portugal in face of the greatest difficulties. Marmont was a man of a totally different type and class ; he was only thirty-six, some twenty years younger than Masséna, but had seen much service under Napoleon since the siege of Toulon. His merits were great but as events proved he was not to be compared with his predecessor in tactical skill in handling masses of men in presence of the enemy.

On the morning of 12 May three regiments of French cavalry moved from Ciudad Rodrigo to the heights of Carpio. The British cavalry piquets fell back from the line of the Azava on Espeja and were followed up by a squadron. Beckwith's Brigade thereupon went out in front of that village and the Riflemen advanced in skirmishing order and after a little rifle practice drove back the French who lost a few horses. Our cavalry thereupon re-occupied their original post at Carpio beyond the

¹ Simmons, pp. 173-4 ; Tomkinson's *Diary*, pp. 102-3. See also Fortescue, viii, p. 176.

Azava. The Light Division continued in its old quarters. Writing on 18 May from Espeja Simmons gives an excellent summary of the fighting during Masséna's retreat and ends "Since our advance from Santarem on 6 March, seven of our officers have laid down their lives and a great number have been wounded. I soon expect to get my lieutenancy. If I live I shall get a Company sooner in this regiment than any other."¹

¹ Simmons did not get his Company until 1828, seventeen years later! He had then nineteen years' service in the Rifles, had served throughout the Peninsular War from 1809 onward and at Waterloo and had been thrice very severely wounded.

FUENTES DE OÑORO

FUENTES DE OÑORO

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE PORTUGUESE FRONTIER, MAY—DECEMBER, 1811.

Soult's attempt to relieve Badajoz. Battle of Albuera—Badajoz re-invested—Wellington raises the siege—Marmont reorganizes his Army—He marches on Badajoz—The Light Division on the Agueda—March to Alemtejo—Excessive heat—D'Erlon joins Soult—They join Marmont at Badajoz—Wellington's position on the Caya—The Marshals reconnoitre the British position—and decide *not* to attack—The French armies disperse—Wellington orders disembarkation of his siege-train—The Army returns to Rodrigo—Barnard with 3rd Battalion Companies join the Light Division—Departure of Sidney Beckwith—Serious sickness on the Agueda—Outpost work and reconnaissance near Rodrigo—Marmont moves north on Rodrigo—Is joined by Dorsenne from Salamanca—Wellington stands at Fuente Guinaldo—Combat of El Bodon—A narrow escape—Craufurd's obstinacy—Wellington's greeting on his arrival—Accounts by Leach, Kincaid and Simmons of the episode—Wellington withdraws to position near Souto—Marmont again declines action and retires—The French go into winter quarters—New arrangement of the Light Division—Life of the Rifle officers in winter quarters—Hill's raid into Estremadura—Surprise of Arroyo Molinos—Composition and distribution of the three Battalions of the 95th Rifles during the year 1811—The Hythe Tablet.

MARMONT'S first act after superseding Masséna on 10 May was to withdraw his army towards Salamanca. Four days later, on the 14th, Wellington sent the 3rd and 7th Divisions to reinforce Beresford in Alemtejo and on the 16th he started to join him himself. On that very day was fought the bloody but inconclusive action of Albuera. Although our Riflemen did not bear a hand in this battle (and it is noteworthy that it was the only general action fought in the Peninsular War in which none of them took part), it is necessary to outline briefly the events which led up to it so as to keep the thread of our story. True, it was not one of Wellington's battles and in

See Map
"Lisbon to
Valladolid"
at end of
volume.

consequence it did not attract the attention it deserved. Also owing to faulty dispositions and the mistakes of some of the leaders it was only saved from being a serious disaster by the magnificent fighting qualities of our splendid British Infantry who declined to accept defeat and whose steadfastness finally wore down the French attacks.

It will be recalled how Wellington had sent Beresford on 8 March with two Divisions to try to relieve Badajoz but when the news of the fall of that fortress reached him he ordered Beresford to march on Portalegre and attack Soult. Soult had returned to Seville on 20 March and Mortier whom he had left at Badajoz had entered Portugal and captured Campo Mayor but fell back on hearing of Beresford's approach. Beresford after various delays crossed the Caya on the 25th with the 2nd Division under William Stewart, the 4th under Cole, and a Portuguese Division. The same day his cavalry had a smart affair with Latour Maubourg's cavalry in which our 13th Light Dragoons greatly distinguished themselves. Owing to the Guadiana being in flood and also to the lack of bridging materials he did not get across that river with all his force until 8 April. Meanwhile the French had worked hard to repair the defences at Badajoz and when Beresford arrived before the fortress it was once again in a defensible condition. Wellington who had left Sabugal on 16 April arrived before Badajoz on the 22nd and made a personal reconnaissance around it and, leaving instructions for Beresford's guidance in the not improbable event of Soult attempting to raise the siege, he started on the 25th to rejoin his main force before Ciudad Rodrigo. Beresford with a very inadequate siege-train, mainly collected from the old armament of Elvas, opened his first trenches on the night of 8 May and some progress was made.

Soult having assembled about 25,000 men at Seville on 10 May marched north to relieve the place and Beresford on the 13th abandoned the siege and concentrated his forces at Albuera, fourteen miles south of Badajoz. On the 15th he had with him 10,000 British

and some 22,000 Spaniards and Portuguese and took up a position which should have been highly defensible had it been properly occupied; this according to the opinions of those who were there and also of those who have since studied the matter, it certainly was not. Soult attacked at 8 a.m. on the 16th and attempted to outflank Beresford. Then followed one of the most desperate fights in which the British or any other army has ever been engaged. The losses were very severe, the British losing 4,000 out of the 10,000 that commenced the fight, the total losses of the Allies being nearly 6,000; that of the French, including 900 prisoners, was nearly 8,000. The battle was a drawn one but since Soult was compelled to retire on the 18th and thus failed to raise the siege of Badajoz whilst Beresford renewed the investment on the 19th, the battle is claimed as a victory for our arms.

Wellington was justifiably annoyed at the whole conduct of the affair, and complained of "the loss and disorganization" he suffered thereby.

On 19 May Wellington riding at speed—he covered fifty miles on some days—southward from Sabugal to join Beresford near Badajoz, received on his arrival at Elvas the news of the fight at Albuera and notwithstanding Beresford's losses and depressing reports decided to carry on the siege of Badajoz with the aid of the two Divisions, the 3rd and the 7th, now on the march southward. On 25 May there was a sharp affair at Usagre between Beresford's cavalry and Soult's rear-guard cavalry in which the British did extremely well. On the same day Wellington invested Badajoz on the north side with the 7th Division and two days later the 3rd reinforced the other divisions on the south. The batteries opened on 3 June but owing to ancient or defective ordnance and lack of suitable ammunition, little was effected. An attempt to carry the place by storm on the night of the 6th failed, a second attempt made with greater numbers two days later also failed. Meanwhile the clouds were gathering and Wellington, aware

of the impending advance of Soult from the south and that Marmont's force was marching from the north to join hands with him, ordered the siege to be raised at noon on the 10th. Marmont during this time had been fully occupied reorganizing his army and had replaced its Corps organization by one of Divisions. He had also changed most of his commanders, retaining only Loison. Apart from sundry detachments which could not be spared from local duties his available force was only 28,000 strong, of which 2,500 were cavalry, with thirty-six guns. This was divided into six divisions, each consisting of about twelve weak battalions. Realizing that this force was too small to undertake independent operations he decided to move south and join Soult in Estremadura and on 1 June he sent Reynier with five divisions to march for the Pass of Los Baños whilst he himself with one division and his light cavalry moved on Rodrigo where on the 5th he sent some provisions and on the following day marched in two columns on Espeja and Gallegos. It was a fine piece of bluff and completely imposed upon the cautious Spencer in command of the 30,000 men left to observe Ciudad Rodrigo who at once fell back on Alfayates and Souto whilst Marmont, having effected his purpose, turned and followed Reynier by Los Baños. Spencer having first most unnecessarily destroyed what was left of the shattered fortress of Almeida now marched south to join Wellington.

We will now see how these not very creditable manœuvres affected the Light Division. The stay of the Light Division on the line of the Agueda had been one of constant worries and unnecessary moves. On 26 May it was ordered to Nava d'Haver and Aldea da Ponte and all hands imagined that they were on the road for Alemtejo but on the next day they were sent back again to Espeja and Gallegos. On the night of 4 June the Rifles had a jovial dinner-party to celebrate the King's Birthday followed by country dances, *boleros* and *fandangos*. But at 11 p.m. the festivities were suddenly put a stop to by the arrival of an order to march at 3 o'clock on the following morning. Accordingly,

before daylight on the 5th Beckwith's Brigade left Espeja, only to be ordered to return thither again at noon. Next day, the 6th, the Light Division was again ordered to march south and bivouacked in a wood near Alfayates.

On the 7th the march southward was definitely begun and on this day the Light Division forded the Coa near Sabugal at the very spot where they had crossed it to attack the French on 3 April. The bivouac that night was in the chestnut grove where there had been such hard fighting and where several of the officers and men of the Light Division had been buried. They found that the graves here had been dug up by wolves and their contents scattered about. Thence the march was continued by Penamacor and Lousa. The heat throughout was excessive and the marches were usually conducted by night but on the 10th "by some mistake of the Staff" the march was commenced at *midday* with the result that many men fell out. Soldiers of the present day accustomed to wear good sun-helmets and loose khaki jackets can hardly realize what our men must have suffered in these marches during the summer months in central and southern Spain. Kincaid has incidentally left a note of the dress during this march. On 12 June the Light Division passed Castello Branco and two subalterns of the Rifles having "called" on the Bishop and admired his garden proceeded to steal his oranges! The difficulty was how to carry off the fruit since the Rifleman's "dress was pocketless and fitted as tight as a glove." They however managed to stow about a dozen each in their "sugar-loaf-shaped regimental caps" as the hideous "shako" of the day was styled. Of course the dénouement was that they met the Bishop and one of the thieves in an access of courtesy removed his "cap" with results that may be imagined.¹

On the afternoon of the 13th the Tagus was crossed at Villa Velha

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 221.

and on the 15th Portalegre was reached. In the eight days the Division had covered over 120 miles, an average of about fifteen a day.

A cavalry officer who was at Villa Velha thus describes this march. "The Light Division passed on the 13th and lost two men from heat in ascending the banks of the Tagus. The *esprit* of this Division is so great they will suffer anything sooner than leave their ranks on the march; from which spirit the two men in question lost their lives."¹

On 18 June Marmont moving from Plasencia crossed the Tagus by a flying bridge at Almaraz and arrived at Merida. Two days later he entered Badajoz; here he met Soult who had collected about 28,000 men including a fresh Corps numbered the IXth, formed by d'Erlon and brought by him down from Valladolid, the grand total of the two Marshals' armies amounting to 60,000 men. Wellington whose intelligence service was always excellent, knowing that this combination was imminent had withdrawn on the 17th across the Guadiana and assembled a force of 54,000 men of whom 37,000 were British between Elvas and Arronches. With this he took up a position on a front of twelve miles on the heights between the Caya and the Gebora. The Light Division were posted on the Caya in reserve about three miles in rear of Campo Mayor.

On the same day in compliance with Wellington's urgent request, Blake started southward from Jerumenha with some 10,000 infantry under Ballesteros and Zayas and 1,000 cavalry and marched for the Condado de Niebla whence he could threaten Seville and thus cause Soult anxiety. On the 23rd Soult and Marmont made a reconnaissance in force of Wellington's position and there were some cavalry affairs in which some of our horsemen, new to the Peninsula, got into sad trouble. The results of the day's observations were that the Marshals

¹ Tomkinson, *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, p. 195.

decided it were better *not* to attack the Allies. There can be no doubt but that the French leaders as well as many of the officers and the men had unpleasant memories of the results of attacking the British at Bussaco, at Fuentes de Oñoro and recently, at Albuera and were in no mood to attack Wellington in a prepared position. So it was that four days later Soult, leaving the Vth Corps behind with d'Erlon, started off south towards Seville with a brigade of cavalry and two divisions of infantry.

About the middle of July d'Erlon withdrew to Merida and Marmont to the valley of the Tagus near Plasencia. On the 18th Wellington ordered his troops into cantonments between Castello Branco and Estremoz.

There was much sickness among the troops during this time. From the journals of the officers we read of fevers, ague and dysentery and the monotony of the life in camp and bivouac on the arid plain above the Caya told on everybody. Much discomfort was caused to the men by the presence of many snakes (which were probably harmless) and of scorpions (most of which were certainly much the reverse). The only recreation was a bathe in the stagnant waters of the Caya which are reported to have "abounded with water-snakes, leeches and all manner of devils." During all this time Craufurd frequently had the Light Division out for drill and exercise.

Wellington had decided not to renew the siege of Badajoz mainly owing to the unhealthiness of the surroundings in summer. One alternative line of action was to march and relieve Cadiz but this would inevitably have brought down upon him the united forces of Victor, Soult and Marmont ; however he had another plan in view.

About the end of July Beresford was relieved of his command and from this time forward it ceased to be a separate army. Wellington returning northward now left Hill (who had recently come out from England) with the 2nd and 4th Divisions and some Portuguese troops,

altogether about 9,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, in Alemtejo to keep an eye on d'Erlon in Estremadura. Now too having decided to lay siege to Rodrigo he ordered his siege-train which had been lying on ships in the Tagus for some two years to be disembarked and taken up the Douro by boat to Lamego and thence over the mountains by Trancoso to Pinhel and Almeida, a tremendous task which was admirably carried out. On 21 July the Light Division started northward and halted next day at Portalegre and on the 23rd at Castello de Vide where they remained for six days in cantonments. During this halt Craufurd issued what Leach describes as "an immense string of the most frivolous orders" which he says were "evidently compiled for no other reason than that of annoying the officers of his Division."

On the 30th the Division crossed the Tagus at Villa Velha and thence marched *via* Castello Branco, Bemposta and Quadrazaes to Fuente Guinaldo across the frontier, arriving there on 10 August.

See Map
XX, p. 298.

On 11 August the French outposts south of Rodrigo were driven in and the Light Division occupied the villages of Martiago, El Saugo, Lariquella and Villarejo, thus blockading the fortress on that side. The other Divisions were dispersed as follows: the 5th near the Pass of Perales and Navas Frias to watch the road from Plasencia, the 4th at Pedragão, the 1st at Penamacor, the 7th between Sabugal and Villar Mayor and the 6th between Nava d'Haver and Barba del Puerco.

The total front thus observed was over fifty miles in a direct line and by the available roads much further. An important addition was made to the Light Division on 21 August by the arrival of Barnard with three Companies of the 3rd Battalion which had fought at Barrosa. On the same day arrived the missing Company of the same Battalion which it may be recalled had been annexed by Spencer at Sobral in the preceding autumn when on its way to join the Light Division. The process of extracting this Company from the

grasp of its temporary possessor required a direct order from Wellington who on 22 August wrote :

“There is in General Howard’s Brigade a Company of the 3rd Battalion 95th Regiment which Sir Brent Spencer detained last year, as the Regiment was his. I wish this Company to join its Battalion and that one of the Companies of the 60th in the Brigade with the Buffs, etc. should be in General Howard’s Brigade ; this brigade having the 71st with it requires light infantry less than any of the others.”¹ General Howard upon relinquishing his grip of Travers’s Company published a General Order expressing “his sincere regret at losing Captain Travers and his Company of Rifle Men whose conduct had been such as to give highest satisfaction.”

This Company with the three others were placed in Beckwith’s Brigade. About the same time Captain Hart’s Company of the 2nd Battalion which had embarked at Portsmouth on 15 July and landed at Lisbon on 14 August also joined the Light Division.

To the regret of the Regiment, the Light Division and the Army, Sidney Beckwith had towards the end of August to return to England broken in health. His loss was great. He was one of the original officers of the Rifle Corps and had joined it on its formation in 1800 from the 71st Regiment and accompanied it to Ferrol. He was at Copenhagen with Nelson and in the Walcheren Expedition and had served in the Peninsula from Vimeiro onward. He was promoted and appointed to command the Rifle Corps in January 1803 when it was ordered to be styled the “95th, or Rifle Regiment,” and was one of those who worked directly under Moore at Shorncliffe. There can be no doubt but that his methods, influence and individuality had much to do with the training of British Riflemen in these eventful

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Hill, 22 August, 1811. The 71st had been made Light Infantry in 1808.

years and that to this day all Riflemen owe him a deep debt of gratitude. He was a noble and chivalrous soldier.¹

The cantonments on the Agueda claimed many victims, no less than three officers besides many men of the 95th having died whilst the Regiment was there. No doubt the majority of them had contracted disease in the unhealthy bivouacs near the Caya ; the other Regiments of the Light Division suffered equally. Major-General Drummond who had commanded the 2nd Brigade of the Light Division with great ability during the preceding months died at Fuente Guinaldo on 7 September.

On the night of 26 August a strong party of French infantry from Rodrigo entered the village of Zamarra and plundered it ; pushing on, they surprised a dragoon piquet in the village of Pastores. Next day the right wing of the 1st Battalion and four Companies of the 3rd Battalion under Barnard occupied Zamarra. On the 29th at 4 a.m. Barnard marched to Atalaya about three miles south-east and the same day a Company of Riflemen was ordered to push forward and endeavour to find out if the enemy were sending supplies into the fortress from Salamanca. Simmons who was detailed for the task was given a few German Hussars to scout for him and started towards nightfall by a circuitous route. This part of the country is very wooded and he reached El Tenebron on the road to Tamames unobserved and after cautiously reconnoitring the village, entered it and bivouacked for the night in the adjacent woods. Next morning he pushed on through Boca Cara across the Salamanca road to Santi Espiritus. Here he met some of Julian Sanchez's *guerrilleros* who told him a convoy had left Salamanca and had been forced to return thither owing to the assembly of several guerrilla bands. Simmons returned the same night to Atalaya. It was a venturesome affair and well carried out.

¹ He was promoted to Major-General in 1814 and died in 1831 when Commander-in-Chief in Bombay.

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On 9 September Leach with his own Company and another of Caçadores was sent southward into the Sierra de Gata to occupy the mountain posts of Las Herrias and Aldea Juella. According to John Cox a second Company of Riflemen was sent to Robledillo about the same time. Here they remained patrolling every possible line of advance until 22 September when in consequence of Marmont's advance they were ordered to rejoin Headquarters.

During the closing days of August Wellington had become aware that Marmont was moving northward through the Sierra de Gata and a few days later he heard that Dorsenne with some 25,000 men who had been operating against the Spanish Army in Galicia was advancing on Salamanca by forced marches to join Marmont, their combined forces amounting to over 50,000 men. Wellington had only 46,000 men available of which 30,000 men were British. He had another 14,000 men sick, largely composed of those who had served in the Walcheren Expedition. He was thus in no position to fight a general action to prevent the re-victualling of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Marmont after crossing the Sierra de Gata reached El Tenebron on 23 September and the same day Dorsenne arrived at San Munoz on the Huebra River. On this day Wellington ordered the 4th Division up to Fuente Guinaldo and drew in the others on his left between that town and Fuentes de Oñoro. The Light Division remained in its advanced position on the right bank of the Agueda in rear of the Vadillo stream, the 3rd Division also remained in the villages of Pastores and El Bodon on the left bank. The 5th was still detached to guard the Pass of Perales fourteen miles distant. Next day the 24th the French Army entered Rodrigo and a large force of cavalry crossed the Agueda and on the following day Marmont made reconnaissances both on Espeja and Fuente Guinaldo. Two cavalry brigades crossed the Azava and pushing on towards Espeja were charged and driven back by the 14th and 16th Light Dragoons and Graham, who had succeeded Spencer in command

of the 1st Division and was in command on the left, brought up some of his light infantry who effectually checked any further advance. But Montbrun with four Brigades moving on Fuente Guinaldo nearly succeeded in cutting off some of the regiments of the 3rd Division who were scattered in front of El Bodon. Things became so serious that Wellington had to assume personal command and dispose of the few troops available and send for some of the 4th Division to support him. Montbrun made several furious attacks with his cavalry which all failed and eventually the British force was withdrawn, the infantry moving in squares as at Fuentes de Oñoro. Marmont had sent for some infantry but they arrived too late and meanwhile the retiring British force was joined by the 4th Division. It was a narrow escape. That night Wellington held on to his position at Fuente Guinaldo with the 3rd and 4th Divisions and some Portuguese, his whole force, including cavalry, being little more than 15,000 strong. He sent word to Graham to draw in with his Divisions to Nava d'Haver, also for the 7th to close in and above all, for the Light Division to join him at Fuente Guinaldo.

Marmont meanwhile had hurried up his Divisions and by nightfall had quite 40,000 men in line ready to attack in the morning. The position was serious, for Graham's two Divisions were a good ten miles distant. And now once again Craufurd gave an example of his obstinacy. What his reasons were it is hard to say, but although he obeyed Wellington's order to retire he only marched between three and four miles and halted at 9 p.m. Not only did he thus halt but he did not move off again till daylight and in consequence did not reach Fuente Guinaldo until late in the day.¹

¹ Leach in his MS. Journal says that Craufurd did not march till towards evening and halted at 9 p.m. in a field near Cespedosa. He adds that they marched next morning at daybreak and arrived at Fuente Guinaldo "at about 1 o'clock" (other authorities say between 3 and 4 in the afternoon). Kincaid (*Adventures* p. 91) says that the Light Division "remained on the banks of the Vadillo and had nearly been cut off, through the obstinacy of General Craufurd who did not choose to obey the

It is unquestionable that his conduct vastly increased the difficulties and dangers of Wellington's position. Wellington was naturally enough extremely angry at Craufurd's disobedience and on his arriving said "I am glad to see you safe, Craufurd," the latter replied "Oh ! I was in no danger, I assure you." "But I was from your conduct" said Lord Wellington. Craufurd's muttered comment on this was typical : "He is damned crusty today."¹

But fortune was on our side. For, once again Marmont influenced apparently by the same fears which had induced him not to attack on the Caya declined to attack. Had he done so, it might have gone hardly with Wellington. As it was, after dark Wellington withdrew southward to Alfayates where he had selected a second defensible position and whither his Divisions on the flanks were all marching.

order he had received the day before, but we nevertheless succeeded in joining the army by a circuitous route on the afternoon of the 26th." The same authority in *Random Shots* (pp. 246-248) gives further details of this affair. The Rifles according to their usual habit had during the last few weeks made themselves at home on the Vadillo at a *cortijo* which sheltered a Spaniard and his family and "some young female relations" but Marmont's advance compelled them to seek a bivouac in the open on the 25th and here they remained throughout the 26th whence they heard the combat at El Bodon miles in their left rear in full swing and Craufurd "getting alarmed at his own temerity" withdrew the Division to a hollow some distance in rear. "The situation was more than ticklish with an enemy on three sides and an almost impassable mountain on the fourth." Then follow some criticisms on the disobedience of orders by the General. Against these in the margin the irrepressible commentator in the old volume I possess has written "3rd instance of Bob Craufurd's *Coa Folly*."

The retreat was effected through Robleda, and Simmons in his diary notes on the circuitous route taken and in a letter home describes how they assembled near Las Agallas after dark and then after circumambulating (sic) towards Fuente Guinaldo halted near Cespedosa. Since the distance from Cespedosa to Fuente Guinaldo is only ten miles by the ordinary route it is clear that Craufurd must have done a good deal of "circumambulating" during his march of the 27th which certainly took eight hours and possibly ten or more.

¹ *Private Journal* of F. S. Larpent p. 85 quoted in Rev. A. Craufurd's *Light Division* p. 185. A well-known Light Division story.

Marmont also withdrew after nightfall, before midnight however he heard of the British retirement and ordered a countermarch but it was then too late to overtake Wellington or do any harm.

When Wellington thus retired from Fuente Guinaldo on the evening of the 25th, he left there the Light Division with the 1st German Hussars to hold the heights as rear-guard. At midnight the Division after making up their bivouac fires to deceive the enemy followed and marched all night and, with the exception of a trifling halt, continued marching until 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the following day.

The retreat was not without incident. In the morning Craufurd, having remained behind with a troop of dragoons to reconnoitre, was attacked by the French cavalry and whilst our Riflemen, confident in the presence of their faithful friends of the King's German Hussars in rear, were marching carelessly along the road, they were suddenly galloped into by Craufurd and his Staff with his cavalry escort, followed by the French horsemen ! Fortunately the country was rough and rocky and our men, throwing themselves into the broken ground on either side of the road, soon checked the further advance of the horsemen. The French thereupon dismounted and opened fire. Later on some of their infantry came up and there was some uninteresting skirmishing throughout the afternoon. Four Companies of the Rifles and the 3rd Caçadores were extended and the retirement continued. In the evening the Light Division joined the 5th Division at Aldea Velha three miles south-west of Forcalhos. A French infantry brigade seized the village of Aldea da Ponte and, although driven out by Pakenham's Brigade with great spirit, re-took it again at nightfall and remained in possession. There was some sharp cannonading and Picton's light troops were also engaged with the enemy. At sunset the 3rd and 4th Divisions fell back on Souto where Wellington had selected a strong position about six miles in extent between Rendo and Quadrazaes. Once again the Light Division were

left as rear-guard and followed at 2 a.m. on the 28th marching into the village of Souto at about 8 o'clock. On the heights behind were assembled all Wellington's Divisions save those with Hill in Alemtejo.

Marmont who had hurried up his whole force had no idea of attacking Wellington in a position he had selected and had possibly fortified and never advanced beyond Aldea da Ponte ; a few days later he fell back across the Agueda. He had succeeded in his operations so far in that he had re-victualled Ciudad Rodrigo but he had failed in the main objective of his great concentration namely, to deal Wellington a crushing blow. He now went into winter quarters in the places he had left in September whilst Dorsenne returned to Salamanca and the valley of the Douro.

On the night of the 29th and 30th the Light Division remained in bivouac in the woods of Souto. The chestnut trees here are of enormous size and are mentioned in various journals. Some of the bigger ones were hollow and would "accommodate ten men" for the night or several horses. Four officers of the Rifles dined in one.

On the 1st the Division was cantoned about Aldea Velha. Wellington now ordered the whole army into winter quarters and the Light Division were once more distributed along the Agueda with the 3rd Division in support at Fuente Guinaldo and the 4th at Gallegos, the 1st, 5th and 6th were about Guarda, Celorico and Freixedas and the 7th at Penamacor. The cavalry were on the line of the Coa and at Alverca. For the next two months and in fact until the beginning of the New Year our soldiers had a fairly quiet time, one of their tasks being to prevent the peasantry taking supplies to Rodrigo for sale.

The blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo was carried on mainly by Julian Sanchez's guerrilla bands which swarmed round the fortress and on 15 October captured the Governor (General Renaud) and five officers as well as some 200 head of cattle belonging to the garrison. On 2 November in consequence of a report that a new Governor was

on his way, the Light Division was sent forward with the 3rd in support, the French however effected their purpose and the Governor got in.

During September Hill, who it will be recalled was on the Portuguese Frontier near Portalegre watching d'Erlon in Estremadura, ascertained that the enemy had been compelled to extend his force widely so as to fill the gap north of the Guadiana caused by Marmont having called in Foy to Ciudad Rodrigo. Hill obtained Wellington's leave to strike at a Division (Girard's) which was somewhat isolated between Merida and Caceres. On 22 October Hill, having obtained a promise from the Spanish leader Castaños to assist him, marched with some 10,000 men, British and Portuguese, on Caceres and got in touch with the Spanish force. Girard had meanwhile marched southward totally unaware of the advance of the Allies, thanks to the loyalty of the Spanish peasantry. Girard halted at Arroyo Molinos about half way between Caceres and Merida. Here at early dawn on 27 October he was surprised by Hill and heavily defeated, his force being dispersed with a loss of 600 to 700 killed, 1300 prisoners and all his guns; less than 500 French escaped. Hill's losses were only about one hundred killed and wounded. It was a most brilliant stroke. Hill then returned to the Portuguese frontier and went into winter quarters in November at Portalegre. With this affair at Arroyo Molinos, the fighting so far as concerned Wellington's Army for the year 1811, ended.

The life of the Light Division in their winter quarters on the line of the Agueda was by no means exciting. When the weather permitted, the officers had some coursing and shooting. The evenings were commonly spent in dancing with "the village fair ones" who in return for the instruction they gave in Spanish dancing were taught to dance Irish jigs! The lack of books was a great source of regret for the weather was often extremely bad and all ranks had to seek shelter in the wretched hovels with but scant means of occupying their time.

COA AND AGUEDA, 1810-1812

COA AND AGUEDA, 1810-1812

Books were of course an absolute impossibility ; it was hard enough to obtain and transport the barest necessities of life, clothing, food, wine and spirits and cigars. Cigars seem to have been the very greatest comfort and consolation to the vast majority of officers. On 11 December there was a remarkable arrival of woodcock, no doubt driven from the higher sierras by the severe weather, and some great bags were made. On 20 December Wellington came to Fuente Guinaldo where he inspected the three British regiments of the Light Division.

A story illustrative of the ways of the Rifles is told of the Christmas festivities of 1811. One of the Field Officers had taken to farming and rejoiced in a flock of turkeys whilst another kept a sheep. A party of young officers intent on a three days' visit to some fair friends in the Sierra de Gata, calmly annexed the sheep and some of the turkeys and proceeded on their way rejoicing. So far so good, the difficulty was to account for the disappearance of the stock on their return. This was however triumphantly overcome, for one of the party getting killed in action soon afterwards, the remainder, devoid of all shame, put the whole blame on his shoulders ! It would be difficult to imagine greater cynicism.

NOTE ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE REGIMENT IN 1811.

No little confusion has arisen with regard to the composition and distribution of the Battalions of the Regiment during 1811. At the beginning of the year the Rifle Regiment was at its maximum strength of three Battalions, each of ten Companies—no less than thirty Companies of British Riflemen, of which eight Companies of the 1st Bat-

talion, three Companies of the 2nd and five Companies of the 3rd Battalion were serving in the Peninsula.

There is no better way of tracing the changes in a corps a century ago than by examining Monthly Returns, Pay Lists and Muster Rolls. These from time to time throw curious and amusing sidelights on the ways of our soldiers of those days. As is well known, the Pay Lists and Muster Rolls were signed by Officers Commanding Companies, the whole Roll being certified by the Commanding Officer and the Adjutant. But, apparently to ease the mind of the British taxpayer, these documents before being sent to the Horse Guards had to be "Sworn before a Justice of the Peace" and countersigned by him. This rule sometimes caused Muster Rolls to be held over for many months, in fact until such time as the signature of a J.P. could be obtained.

The Rolls of the 1st Battalion for the first Quarter of 1811 (when the Battalion was on the Rio Mayor and later in pursuit of Masséna, in lieu of bearing the signature of some high Civil countersigning functionary are boldly endorsed—

"Sworn before me
at Camp near Campo Mayor, as Justice of the Peace
Robert Craufurd
(Br. Com^d. light Division) "

Likely enough other Generals who were J.P.'s may have done the same but Craufurd's is the only signature I have come across and I have examined many Pay Lists during the last 30 years. Craufurd's signatures are unusually clear and good and might enlighten those who of late years have expressed doubts as to the correct spelling of his name.

The Muster Rolls of the 1st Battalion for the years 1810, 1811 and 1812 are all bound in one volume and the Roll for the first Quarter

for 1811 contains the signatures of every officer in the Battalion except those of one Captain and six Subalterns. I know of no simpler and surer way of obtaining a facsimile tracing of any military signature than from these old Rolls.

Throughout the year 1811 the strength of the eight Companies of the 1st Battalion on service decreased steadily. In January it numbered 791 Rank and File of which 88 were "sick" and 687 "present fit for duty."¹ The number of men in hospital fluctuated greatly, thus in February at Vallé there were only 75 sick whereas in March the number rose to 109 owing to the fighting and during the pursuit of Masséna. In April, after Sabugal it had risen to 114 and in July it fell to 88. Then came the unhealthy time on the Caya and in September there were 142 sick and the next month 162. In December the Battalion numbered 702 Rank and File of which 113 were in hospital and 578 present and fit for duty.

The two "Recruiting Companies" at home were practically only *cadres* of 42 Rank and File and seem to have got very few recruits and in consequence no drafts were sent out. There is a Muster Roll for a "Recruit Company, 1st Battalion" at Brabourne Lees between January and July and later, at Ashford, attached to the Muster Rolls of the 3rd Battalion.

In January 1811 the 2nd Battalion had Headquarters and seven Companies at Hythe with 553 Rank and File, the eighth Company, Charles Beckwith's (97 R. and F.) being with the 1st Battalion at Vallé, and the remaining two, Cadoux's and Jenkins' (200 R. and F.) at Cadiz. In February Captain Mitchell had taken over Beckwith's Company. In July Captain J. B. Hart's Company (100 R. and F.) was sent out to Spain. At the end of the year Headquarters and six Companies

¹ The difference in the total of "sick" and "fit for duty" and that of the number of "effective Rank and File" is due to the number of men "on command."

History of the Rifle Brigade

were at Hythe,¹ one at Cadiz (Cadoux's), one at Tarifa (Jenkins's) and two (Mitchell's and Hart's) were with the Light Division near Ciudad Rodrigo.

In the 2nd Battalion Records, the following entry occurs :
"27 December 1811. General Orders received for establishing a School in the Battalion and Richard Howardin was appointed School Master Sergeant and ordered to Chelsea to receive his instructions relative to Dr. Bell's system of teaching."

¹ A curious memento of the stay of the 2nd Battalion at Hythe in 1811 came to light some years ago. When the late Colonel C. G. Slade (who formerly commanded the 2nd Battalion) was Inspector-General of Musketry, he was shown in 1892 close to his Quarters on the hill behind the present Hythe Barracks an old ball-alley. Into the upper part of the central wall of this old court or alley was built in a slab of sandstone measuring 12½ inches, by 21 inches, in which was clearly cut the "Bugle Horn" Badge of the Regiment with "95th Regt. 2nd Batt." on either side of it and "1811" below. Colonel Slade had the stone photographed some years later and sent an account of it to the *Chronicle*. Upon examining the stone closely I found, faintly cut in the left hand bottom corner and almost illegible, due to the flaking and weathering of the stone, "Lt. Col. H. Wade." There is no record of how or when this slab was built in to the wall but Colonel Slade ascertained that old St. Nicholas' church and churchyard occupied the site of the present barracks and that although the church was removed some 200 years ago the churchyard was used at the beginning of the last century for the burial of soldiers who died there. Since over 130 of the 2nd Battalion died after the return of the Battalion from Walcheren in the years 1809-1810 there are fair grounds for his suggestion that this stone was formerly placed in the old graveyard which lay immediately below the ball-alley.

I did not have an opportunity of examining the stone closely until some time after Colonel Slade's article appeared. But on doing so I at once saw that the popular belief in Hythe that there was on it a reference to a text was incorrect since it is certain that the lettering in the left hand bottom corner is as stated and does not refer to a text as Colonel Slade and others believed who saw it from a point some distance below.

Since Colonel Hamlet Wade commanded the 2nd Battalion from its first formation in 1805 as well as during the Walcheren Expedition and for some years later, it is reasonable enough to suppose that for whatever purpose the stone was erected, his name should appear on it.

Some ten years later the old ball-alley was pulled down and I last saw the stone in the keeping of the late Captain and Quartermaster A. White in Winchester Barracks about 1905.

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The 3rd Battalion Returns for January 1811 show Headquarters and four Companies of the right wing (385 R. and F.) at Cadiz and one, Percival's (94 R. and F.) in Portugal.

From the muster rolls we gather that the Company Commanders present at Barrosa were Knipe, Gray, Fullarton and Pratt—of these Knipe was killed and Captain Kent succeeded to his Company.¹

On 30 June three Companies (330 R. and F.) left Cadiz for Portugal. In December four Companies of the right wing (375 R. and F.) were at El Bodon.

Turning to the "left wing," we find it at Ashford during the first Quarter of 1811, with five weak Companies under Captains Kent, J. Travers, Hallen, Andrews and Smyth, only 211 strong. A big roll of recruits is attached to this Roll showing that ordinary recruits for "Limited Service" received a bounty of Five Guineas whereas the "Unlimited men" received seven guineas.

In the third Quarter it was still at Ashford with 356 Rank and File, and at the end of the year it was at Shorncliffe with 340 Rank and File.

¹ Captain Kent figures in a coloured plate in this Part of the History reproduced from a water-colour sketch of him in fighting kit made by a brother officer about this time.

CHAPTER XIV.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN SPAIN, 1811-12: SIEGE OF TARIFA.

Review of Operations in Eastern Spain, 1811—The Spaniards re-take Figueras—Suchet's Operations in Catalonia—Siege of Tarragona—British expedition to assist defenders—A Detachment of the 3rd Battalion 95th Rifles accompanies it—Fall of Tarragona—The French re-capture Figueras—Blake embarks at Ayamonte for Murcia—Soult marches against him from Seville—Ballesteros follows Blake from Ayamonte and gains the serrania of Ronda—A Company of the 2nd Battalion 95th Rifles joins him—Napoleon's fresh orders—Suchet defeats Blake—Fall of Murviedro—Failure of Montbrun and Soult to assist Suchet—Soult's difficulties—Tarifa a base of operations—The British Garrison there—Description of the old fortress—Captain Charles Smith, R.E., organizes the defences—Victor's force—He marches on Tarifa—British men-of-war hold up his siege-train—Desultory fighting outside Tarifa—Riflemen mounted on artillery chargers—The siege commences—The bombardment—The walls breached—Summons to surrender refused—Disposition of defenders to guard breach—The French attempt to storm the place—Repulse of the Storming columns—Miserable condition of the attackers—Victor abandons the siege and retires—Loss of the French siege-train—Heavy French casualties—Wellington's opinion of the defensibility of Tarifa before and after the siege—His high approbation of the defenders—Napier's dictum—General Order thanking Captain Jenkins's Riflemen for their "distinguished gallantry."

See Map
"Spain and
Portugal"
at end of
volume.

AS we follow the movements of the British forces in the Peninsula during the years 1808 to 1810, there is a natural inclination to view the campaigns in Portugal and western Spain as matters apart from those carried out by Napoleon's lieutenants in other provinces and more especially in Catalonia and Valencia, far distant and separated by considerable mountain ranges from where the British forces were engaged. Broadly speaking such a method is fairly satisfactory up to a certain point and in the case of a Regimental History undoubtedly serves to keep it within narrower limits. Hitherto we have not had occasion to follow out in any detail the varying fortunes of the French

armies in those regions since they influenced but slightly the movements of those operating along the western line against the British and Portuguese forces. But during 1811 we find French divisions and brigades, at one time employed in lending a hand to Suchet in Murcia and Valencia and at another supporting Soult in Estremadura or in Andalucia. On the other hand, Great Britain's command of the sea made it possible for her to transport troops from one point to another, according to her requirements. Hence it is necessary to follow out in broad detail the general movements in the eastern theatre of war.

It will be remembered how during the first week of 1811 Suchet had captured Tortosa.¹ His next objective in compliance with the Emperor's wishes was Tarragona. Napoleon dissatisfied with Macdonald's conduct of the war in eastern Spain had reduced his Corps the VIIth, from 40,000 to about 25,000 men and had raised Suchet's the IIIrd, from 26,000 to 43,000. Macdonald was ordered to keep order in Catalonia whilst Suchet laid siege to Tarragona. When all arrangements for this were made the Spaniards on 10 April by an audacious *coup de main* recovered Figueras, thus severing the French line of communications. It will be recalled how this small fortress had been treacherously seized by Napoleon in the year 1808. It was necessary to recover the place without delay and Napoleon ordered 14,000 troops from France to attack it. Meanwhile Macdonald's hands were fuller than ever and Suchet had to tackle Tarragona alone. He reached that fortress on 3 May, having been harassed during the latter part of his march along the road from Tortosa, which skirted the shores of the Mediterranean, by Admiral Codrington's squadron of frigates.

Owing to the necessity of capturing an outlying work and consequent delays, the regular siege did not begin till 1 June and on

¹ See Chap. X, p. 184 *ante*.

the 21st Suchet assaulted and took the lower town. This obliged the British squadron to leave the harbour and anchor in the open roadstead and Suchet pressed forward his attack on the upper city. During June a Spanish force under Campoverde known as the "Army of Succour" was assembled north-east of the fortress but Campoverde lacked the courage to make any real effort to assist the besieged garrison. And now comes a but little known episode in our Regimental History. On 26 June a small flotilla arrived having on board some British infantry and half-a-battery of artillery under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Skerrett of the 47th Regiment. The infantry consisted of the 2nd Battalion 47th Regiment and a detachment of the 3rd Battalion 95th Rifles both of which had fought at Barrosa some three months earlier, also some "light" Companies lent by the Governor of Gibraltar. The grand total of this little force was only 1,147. General Graham who commanded at Cadiz had sent this small body of men in reply to the urgent appeal for help from the Regency and had ordered Skerrett to give all possible help but not to risk his men ashore, should he judge Tarragona to be untenable. The detachment from the 95th consisted of Lieutenants Kirkman and Croudace with 4 Sergeants, 4 Corporals 1 Bugler and 25 Private Riflemen. It was sent with the idea of providing instructors for two companies of light infantry to be recruited among the Spaniards in Tarragona. From this it would seem that Graham was not aware of the extremely critical condition of affairs in Tarragona, for the time to enlist and instruct recruits to act as light infantry had long since passed.¹ For Skerrett on his arrival found that the fortress was *in extremis*. Added to this the weather was rough and the disembarkation of troops in the open roadstead where the transports lay was most dangerous. Codrington and Skerrett, who

¹ Despatches from Cadiz. Graham to Liverpool, June 1811.
Captain's Log, *Regulus*.

had landed with the very greatest difficulty, learnt from the Governor that so soon as the western walls of the fortress were breached he would sally forth on the eastern side and cut his way through the besiegers. It was clear that the small British force, once landed, could not be re-embarked under such conditions. At this critical moment a despatch arrived asking Skerrett to land at Villa Nueva de Sitges twenty-five miles east of Tarragona and join the "Army of Succour." Codrington agreed to this and Skerrett and his flotilla departed early on the 28th. It was an unfortunate affair but those who have followed it out are agreed that Skerrett was unduly blamed for his failure to assist. The Spanish Governor had arranged to attempt to break out on the night of the 28th. Suchet however opened his batteries at dawn on that day and by 4 o'clock in the afternoon had made a big breach. At 5 o'clock he stormed the town, the attempt to break out ended in confusion and slaughter and the Spaniards, who defended themselves in many cases with desperate bravery, were put to the sword. There were over 4,000 dead in the streets and half of these were civilians. Nor did the women and children escape and the orgie of pillage and destruction which followed is said to have put into the shade what happened in the following year at Badajoz. The loss of Tarragona was a very severe blow to the Spaniards for it had formed their base and centre of defence in Catalonia for over three years. When the luckless Skerrett arrived at Villa Nueva de Sitges it was of course too late and so the British flotilla sailed for Minorca and thence to Cadiz. The detachment of Riflemen landed at Cadiz on 27 July and a few days later sailed for Lisbon, arriving there on 15 August and marching to join the 3rd Battalion in Portugal.¹ Suchet followed up his success at Tarragona by capturing Montserrat and on 17 August Figueras, after a gallant defence, was starved into surrender.

¹ Captain's Log, *Regulus* and Muster Book, *Regulus*.

We must now follow out the main events in Andalucia so as to bring them up to date with Suchet's operations. Blake, who in accordance with Wellington's wishes had been despatched with three divisions, 12,000 men, after Albuera to threaten Seville with the object of drawing off Soult, after crossing the lower Guadiana had gained the Condado de Niebla where instead of threatening Seville he had attempted to capture the old castle of Niebla. This induced Soult to send two divisions, Godinot's and Conroux's, after him with the result that some 11,000 French troops were drawn off to a remote district, although not exactly in the way Wellington had planned. Blake retired before them and embarked on 8 July at Ayamonte near the mouth of the Guadiana with two of his divisions, Zayas's and Lardizabal's, with most undignified haste and sailed for Cadiz. Two weeks later Blake with the same force sailed from Cadiz and landed at Almeria and joined Freire in Murcia. Their combined forces were about 15,000 infantry and 2,000 horse. Here they threatened Leval in Granada and Soult set out from Seville on 3 August to crush them, arriving there on 7 August. After some arduous marches one of his lieutenants, Godinot, attacked and broke up a Spanish division under O'Donnell (who had succeeded Zayas) whilst Pierre Soult with his cavalry scattered another column, both near Baza. Soult thereupon, on 14 August decided to return to Seville and, sending the bulk of his force to Granada, he broke up the remainder into smaller columns to clear the Sierra Nevada and the Alpujarras, the mountains east of Ronda. He put Godinot in command of these operations who had some minor successes besides suffering some reverses. Just as things were getting quieter a new Spanish force appeared in the sierras to the westward. This was Ballesteros who, some six weeks after Blake embarked at Ayamonte, had followed suit and after stopping at Cadiz, where he apparently picked up Captain Jenkins's Company of the 2nd Battalion sailed for Algeciras. At any rate Ballesteros disembarked at Algeciras on 4 September and Jenkins's

See
Map **XXI**,
p. 316.

Company landed there on the same day. Ballesteros was soon joined by the scattered *partidas* of *guerrilleros* from the serrania of Ronda and resumed his old tactics of harassing the French outlying posts. Jenkins and his Company marched to Jimena, an old town with a ruined castle in the foot-hills about twenty miles north of Gibraltar. Thence he accompanied some of Ballesteros's troops through the serrania to the old Moorish town of Alcala de las Gazules some eighteen miles westward where there was a French post. Alcala is amid the western spurs of the serrania of Ronda and within twenty-five miles of Chiclana where the French were in force. On 18 September our Riflemen had a smart skirmish near Alcala with the French and subsequently fell back through the mountains to Jimena.¹ Ballesteros had several little successes and on 25 September inflicted a smart defeat on a French column near San Roque. In consequence, the partizan warfare broke out once again with renewed force. Soult furious at seeing all his work of the previous year undone by Ballesteros now ordered Godinot to march westward and crush him. This was no easy matter, for Ballesteros always had two points of refuge, Gibraltar and the lesser stronghold Tarifa, whither he could retreat if hard pressed. Soult therefore endeavoured to trap him by ordering Victor at Cadiz to send a column to oust him from the Sierras near Jimena and another to cut him off from Tarifa. Ballesteros however, abandoned San Roque and Algeciras,

¹ Most unfortunately the portion of Sir W. Cope's History on page 65 dealing with the events of 1810-11 is almost inextricably mixed. Sir William not only has entered the skirmish at Alcala as having taken place in 1810 instead of in 1811 but has placed the Defence of Tarifa in December 1810 three months *before* Barrosa, instead of in December 1811 nine months later. He repeats these errors on page 519 (Appendix III) where the events are shown in chronological form in the wrong order.

It is easy to see that the error has arisen from the general similarity of the military situation near Cadiz in the autumns of 1810 and 1811 but it is one that has led many astray. The curious thing is that nobody, even amongst those most interested, seems to have noticed this mistake.

and sought safety under the guns of Gibraltar, Jenkins and his Company of Riflemen returning by sea to Cadiz.¹

Godinot pursued Ballesteros right up to the Rock but was of course unable to do anything with his 10,000 men without a siege-train and he very shortly withdrew. The Spaniards meanwhile had remained in bivouac on the Neutral Ground, being fed by the Governor, but there was no shelter for them. One of Godinot's columns now made an attempt to get to Tarifa but was held up by the fire of British warships on 18 October at the Torre de la Peña where the only road whereby cannon could be taken skirted the foreshore. No sooner had Godinot withdrawn from before the Rock than Ballesteros sallied forth again and following up one of his columns, which had retreated through the serrania, apparently by Ronda and Ubrique, surprised and defeated it at Bornos on 5 November. Soult, doubly furious at these repeated failures, upon Godinot's return to Seville so overwhelmed him with reproaches that the unfortunate General shot himself.

When on 25 August Napoleon heard of the recapture of Figueras he sent orders to Suchet to proceed with the subjugation of the Province of Valencia. A few weeks later he projected a plan for Marmont to march into Estremadura and for d'Erlon to lay siege to Elvas. We have already seen how Marmont's force was in no condition for such an expedition. A month later on 20 October Napoleon once again returned to Suchet and Valencia and issued some orders which as will be seen had very far-reaching effects on the whole conduct of the war.

For the Emperor's strategy was based on the erroneous assumption

¹ Sir W. Cope says that this Company remained in the neighbourhood of Algeciras for two months. This is incorrect. Very shortly after its return to Cadiz it once again embarked and landed at Tarifa. As will be seen, it was actively employed in various expeditions from that place up to the time of the siege in December. Hence the mistake.

that the subjugation of Valencia was a matter of first importance and that Wellington and his small army might be left alone in their winter quarters on the frontiers of Portugal until the spring, when the scattered French forces could be concentrated to overwhelm him. To assist Suchet in his adventure, Napoleon ordered King Joseph at Madrid to send troops to Cuenca, whence they could advance on Valencia and take its defenders in rear. As this obviously weakened the "Army of the Centre," he on 21 November directed Marmont to detach troops from the "Army of Portugal" to make good the deficiency and later on he ordered him to send yet more troops to Suchet's assistance, making a total of some 12,000 men drawn from Marmont's command as well as 3,000 from King Joseph's. In addition, Soult was ordered to assist Suchet by demonstrating from Granada against the Spanish forces in Murcia.

In October in compliance with the Emperor's orders Suchet moved southward and laid siege to Murviedro (the ancient Saguntum) about twenty miles north of Valencia city. Blake, who had recently assumed command of all the Spanish forces in Valencia, thereupon moved up to endeavour to raise the siege and gave battle to Suchet on the south of Murviedro. Unfortunately the Valentian troops which constituted his left wing, disheartened by a long series of disasters, were heavily defeated by inferior numbers and Blake retreated with the remainder of his force into Valencia city. Murviedro surrendered the following day and Suchet advanced on Valencia and succeeded in driving over half of Blake's force into that city and in surrounding it. Blake capitulated with over 17,000 officers and men on 8 January 1812, such fragments of his army as had succeeded in breaking away south making good their escape to Alicante. Meanwhile the detachment of 3,000 men sent to join Suchet from Cuenca had become involved with the *guerrilleros* on the way and so never reached Valencia.

Montbrun, who had been ordered to march from the Tagus on

Alicante, upon nearing that city found that it was too strongly fortified for him to attack. He in consequence fell back to the Tagus, having wasted three weeks on the operation and effected nothing save to weaken the Army of the Centre at a critical period.

So much for the projected assistance to be given to Suchet from the Centre. Turning to Soult, when he received Napoleon's order in December to assist Suchet from Granada he was already deeply committed to an attack on Tarifa situated at the remote south-west corner of Andalucia and had with great difficulty already assembled and detached 13,000 men for this purpose. Hence he was unable to assist Suchet beyond sending his brother Pierre Soult with 800 light cavalry from Granada to the city of Murcia. Pierre Soult carried out his orders in so far that he reached and occupied the town on 25 January 1812 but he soon had to withdraw from it and fall back on Granada.

But Suchet's troubles were not destined to end here, for Napoleon, electing to view the capture of Valencia as terminating the operations in Valencia and Murcia, in January 1812 ordered the withdrawal of a number of his best troops from Spain to reinforce the Grand Army destined for the coming invasion of Russia in the spring.

That Soult was unable to carry out Napoleon's orders to make a diversion in favour of Suchet is not surprising, for although his army all told consisted of some 80,000 men he had many sick and his duties were both varied and severe. The blockade of Cadiz alone took some 20,000 men and the garrison of Badajoz another 5,000. D'Erlon in Estremadura was watching Hill with over 13,000 and Leval at Granada and eastward had his hands full and all of these from time to time required help and support.

Soult was well aware that so long as Ballesteros had Gibraltar or Tarifa to fall back upon he could never get rid of him. Gibraltar was of course impregnable, so he cast his eyes on Tarifa which was useful both to the British and Spaniards since through it came

many supplies from Morocco ; also it gave shelter to our shipping and privateers and we have seen how useful it had been to Graham in his march to Barrosa. In Soult's opinion, the capture of Tarifa would "be more hurtful to the English and to the defenders of Cadiz than the taking of Alicante or even Badajoz, where I cannot go without first securing my left and taking Tarifa."

Tarifa had not been garrisoned by the British until after Soult's advance into Andalucia in January 1810. In April of that year the Governor of Gibraltar sent thither four Companies. During the summer the garrison was somewhat increased and in February 1811, as we have seen, the troops engaged in the Barrosa campaign were assembled there. But in October 1811 it was decided to increase the garrison and Lieutenant-Colonel Skerrett at Cadiz was ordered to take thither the 2nd Battalions of the 47th and 87th Regiments, a detachment of field artillery and a squadron of the 2nd Hussars of the K.G.L. Captain Jenkins's Company of the 95th Rifles which had recently returned to Cadiz also joined the garrison. The total number of British soldiers was about 1,750. There was also some Spanish infantry with 120 artillery, numbering 1,350 all told, under General Copons.

During the autumn several small reconnaissances were made in one of which in November Skerrett drove Victor's advanced posts out of Vejer and in another he marched to Algeciras to join hands with Ballesteros.¹

Tarifa is surrounded by an old Moorish wall with towers at intervals and, having been constructed in the days before artillery, stands below some hills which command it at a few hundred yards range, at one place within 150 yards ; the walls are not built for guns being mere crenelated parapets with a narrow banquette suitable for bowmen or musketry. Strictly speaking it was indefensible but thanks to the

¹ A full account of the French attempt on Tarifa is given in *Reminiscences of a Veteran* by Colonel Bunbury. See also P.R.O., W.O. 1, vol. 225.

energies of a young Engineer officer, Captain Charles Felix Smith R.E.¹ it was made into a strong post. A ravine ran through the town carrying a torrent in wet weather, this entered through a portcullis below a tower known as the Retiro in the centre of the eastern side of the town and Smith arranged so that all the houses on either side bearing on this open space should be loopholed and all streets leading to it blocked up.² In fact the real defences were organized within the walls. Some of the towers were strengthened to carry guns. On the north side of the town about a hundred yards outside the walls the San Francisco convent was put in a state of defence as an outwork, and the smaller houses adjacent to it, demolished. The Island of Tarifa lies 500 yards from the shore at the end of a narrow isthmus and this was defensible enough and was armed with four 24-pounders and two 10-inch mortars. Covering access to the isthmus a redoubt called the Santa Catalina was thrown up on a sandy hill and on this were mounted some 18-pounders.

Soult had collected altogether about 13,000 men and sixteen heavy guns for the expedition, but Victor, whom he had placed in command had to leave detachments at Vejer and at Facinas; hence the actual force which advanced on Tarifa numbered only 10,439. It took 500 horses to get the guns and wagons past the plain of La Janda. The route taken was the western one through the Puerto de Facinas which strikes the shore about a mile north of the Torre de la Peña, five miles north of Tarifa. The Torre stands on one of the lower rocky spurs of the Sierra Enmedio, the road runs close below it and not fifty yards from the sea and had been broken up as much as possible. A British line-of-battle ship, H.M.S. *Statelý*, the *Tuscan* Frigate and a number of gunboats were anchored

¹ Afterwards Major-General Sir C. F. Smith, C.B., who commanded the British Force in Syria in 1840.

² Some years ago the stream was diverted from its old bed and instead of running through the town was led through a tunnel outside of the eastern walls to the sea. The ancient course of the torrent is now a wide paved street and the portcullis tower has been removed.

off the shore and effectually barred any advance by this route so long as the weather was favourable. Once again there was a period of torrential rain and the track past La Janda was deep in mud. As a result, although Victor was at Vejer on 2 December with his infantry, his siege train did not arrive there until the 8th and he only got his guns to Facinas on the 14th nor did he get them to the Torre de la Peña, where they were held up by the British ships which commanded the road, till the 18th. Victor had called in from Los Barrios a brigade which was watching Ballesteros who was near Jimena, also two of Leval's brigades from Malaga. On 21 November these had nearly cut off Ballesteros who once again sought safety under the guns of the Rock. The French brigades proceeded by the Pass of Ojen and were held up by the bad weather, some of the streams being impassable. Ballesteros seized the opportunity to make a vigorous sortie on the 18th December on their rear but was driven back on San Roque. On the same day Skerrett at Tarifa anxious to find out what force was assembling to attack him, ordered a reconnaissance. The Hussars were accompanied by Captain Jenkins's Riflemen mounted on the artillery horses and with a party of *guerrilleros* under Captain Bunbury, Skerrett's Brigade-Major, pushed northward across the plain and about noon came on the French camp in the woods near Facinas. The Riflemen dismounted and made a bold face extending in a single line of skirmishers but the French soon found out there was nothing behind them and sent some dragoons in pursuit. The artillery horses were not ideal chargers and we are told that "the Riflemen could not ride" and it is believed that "their short swords tickled the horses' backs."¹ Anyway the latter became "very violent" and had not our men soon galloped into their infantry supports the result might have been serious for them. On the following day about 4,000 French infantry with

¹ Bunbury, *Reminiscences*, p. 112.

150 cavalry were seen crossing the hills coming by the pass east of the Sierra Enmedio and Skerrett, who had again advanced from Tarifa, had to fall back skirmishing all the way, some of the French cavalry pushing on up to the small river north of Tarifa, where they were checked by a strong piquet of the 87th.

See
Map XXII,
p. 324.

At daybreak on the 20th Skerrett sent out the Riflemen under Jenkins, supported by the light companies of the 47th and 87th with two six-pounders to endeavour to hold in check a big column of the French which advanced along the Algeciras road against the east side of the town with a line of *voltigeurs* extended down to the seashore. A second column advanced from the north and the small British force was pushed back to the high ground north-east of the Corchuela tower and finally had to re-enter the fortress. In this affair the Rifles lost 1 man killed and 11 wounded, the total casualties being 31 British and about 40 Spanish; Leval who was in command reported that he lost 1 officer and 3 men killed and 27 wounded. By nightfall the town was closely invested.

A westerly gale had meanwhile set in and the British ships had been compelled to beat to sea and seek shelter east of Tarifa. The siege train then passed the Torre. The French had repaired the road and established a battery of four 12-pounders and two howitzers with which they kept the smaller gunboats at a distance.¹

At dawn on the 21st Skerrett again sent out the Riflemen and light companies, who drove the French piquets from the heights 400 yards north-east of the town. An equally vigorous sortie was made on the following day against the enemy's posts on the fore-shore north of the town. These sorties were assisted by the fire of the gunboats. On the

¹ The Torre is still in good preservation and on the seaward side is plastered with grape-shot marks. A little north of it by a roadside fountain are two guns planted as pillars said to have belonged to Victor's force in 1811 and abandoned by him when he retreated.

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evening of the 23rd twelve heavy guns of the French siege-train arrived and the engineers commenced their 1st parallel 350 yards north-east of the Corchuela tower. On the night of the 24th they commenced another parallel about 300 yards from the Jesus tower also on the east side. The British gunboats molested these works by indirect fire the targets being invisible from the sea.

The artillery mounted for the defence of the little fortress consisted of eleven pieces on the walls and outworks and twelve on the island. General Copons was in supreme command and he and Skerrett agreed to allot an equal proportion of their men to the defence of the town and island. The direction of the impending French attack being now well ascertained Skerrett disposed his small force in the following order. The defence of the Isla and of the outworks of Santa Catalina and San Francisco were entrusted to the "flank" Battalion and a Spanish battalion. The eastern walls from the Retiro tower to the Jesus tower were manned by the 87th. On their right, the 47th held the Jesus tower and southern walls whilst the Spaniards held the northern and western walls. The Rifles were posted from the Corchuela tower, the highest point of the town, along the eastern walls to the left flank of the 87th. From this portion of the walls the superior range of their weapons could be used with most advantage against the besiegers' working parties and batteries, whilst they took in flank any advance down the Retiro valley. On the two following days the French trenches were pushed on to within 180 yards. On the 26th a southeasterly gale obliged the British ships to leave the east anchorage and run for shelter under the lee of the island and the attackers were relieved from any artillery fire save from two 6-pounders on the Corchuela and Jesus towers and the heavy guns firing from the island and from Guzman's tower. With the gale came the rain and, as is so commonly the case in southern Spain, when the rain came it continued. The soil east of the town is very porous and rapidly became so liquid as to be

almost unworkable and the French engineers had great difficulties to surmount before they completed two batteries for their heavy guns, the upper one at 300 yards range armed with four howitzers and two 12-pounders, the lower one at about 200 yards range armed with four 16-pounders and two 12-pounders. Meanwhile the *tirailleurs* manned the parallels and kept up a sharp fire on the defenders on the walls, who were lucky enough to obtain sandbags from Gibraltar with which to build head-cover for the gunners and Riflemen.

On 29 December at 11 o'clock the French batteries opened and although soldiers of our day may derive amusement at hearing a 16-pound solid shot called "heavy" they might possibly consider it heavy enough if ordered to stand behind a wall one foot thick on a narrow stone banquette with a drop of fifteen feet behind and with a battery of the same 16-pounders, 200 to 300 yards distant, sending shot at them. One 6-pounder on the Corchuela tower was soon knocked out and the other was withdrawn. Those on the Jesus tower were silenced by 3 o'clock and the 18-pounder on the Guzman tower ceased firing.

But the most disturbing feature was that although the ancient Moorish wall was said to be six to nine feet thick in its lower part the first French shot came right through it and lodged in the house behind! This was followed by many others with equal effect. In fact it was quite clear that the walls could not stand any sort of pounding and a breach was soon made in the curtain south of the portcullis. Skerrett now took alarm and wished to abandon the defence. The alternative, to withdraw to the island, was impossible; there was no shelter there for troops and it would have meant the loss of the anchorage followed soon by that of the island itself for it would have been commanded by the French heavy guns. Fortunately Skerrett was overruled by Captain Smith and some other officers, notably Gough of the 87th. Major King who commanded on the Island had the

courage that night to send a despatch by boat to his "commanding officer" the Governor of Gibraltar, informing him of the position and General Campbell at once ordered the transports back to Gibraltar which made any withdrawal impossible. Meanwhile Skerrett had actually had the one "big gun" in the fortress, the 18-pounder on Guzman's tower, spiked.¹

At daylight on the 30th the batteries re-opened fire and widened the breach to no less than thirty feet. At noon Leval summoned the place to surrender. This Skerrett refused, whilst Copons sent word "I will meet you in the breach at the head of my troops and we will talk of it then"—the gallant reply of a gallant Spanish officer. The French thereupon re-opened fire and the breach soon became sixty feet wide, they also dismounted a gun which had been hoisted up on the Jesus tower to replace those damaged the day before. To all this storm of shot fired at the closest range our only reply was from the distant shipping and the island. The supreme moment was evidently close at hand and before describing it I will endeavour to give the exact positions of the defenders at the moment of attack. Skerrett had established his head-quarters on the tower of the church since it was evident that the assault would be on the eastern side; the 87th were drawn in so that their right flank rested on the breach. In rear of the breach was posted a Spanish battalion and the 47th were on the right of the breach. The Rifles were extended along the walls as before. A company of the 47th held the Jesus tower and their fire at 100 yards "flanked" any advance against the breach; the Riflemen's fire was equally effective from the side of the Corchuela whilst on that tower a 6-pounder had been remounted and commanded the approach from the east.

¹ All contemporary accounts agree that Skerrett was personally brave but that he was incapable of quick action and above all *feared to give a decision*—that curse of second-rate officers. Two years after the siege of Tarifa he was responsible for a disaster at Vera in the Pyrenees. He was slain in the assault on Bergen-op-Zoom in 1814.

So much for the defenders—now for the point to be defended. Although the breach was sixty feet wide and apparently easy to ascend there was a sharp fall behind it of at least fourteen feet and Smith's arrangements for retrenching the buildings inside made it no easy matter for the assailants to enter the town even should the breach be carried. The streets were barricaded with the iron window gratings (known as *rejas*) which form so conspicuous a feature in all Spanish towns. Some of these gratings had every alternate bar bent up and were placed as obstacles to retrench the breach. But a few yards north of the breach was the portcullis in the Retiro tower which was closed by an iron gateway with palisades outside. During the siege a great mass of rubbish and many dead bodies of Frenchmen who had been killed or died of sickness had been washed down by the torrent and the night before the attack the besiegers sent masses of timber floating down in the hope that the gate might be thus swept away. This attempt was frustrated by the defenders raising the gate in time and letting the torrent carry all the rubbish away. The channel of the stream is most tortuous and following it down from the French camp one comes into view of the walls of the town on rounding a bluff about 400 yards distant. Down this valley early in the morning of the 31st came two columns of picked French troops, moving on either side of the deep little channel in which runs the Retiro stream. The right column which consisted of 1,000 grenadiers seems to have got some shelter from the trenches near No. 2 Battery before it emerged into the open. This column inclined to its right and made direct for the portcullis. It has been said that the French had ascertained that the breach was retrenched inside and that this attack on the portcullis was intentional; again, others say that the column mistook the way. Certain it is that the deep winding bed of the Retiro stream is sufficient to make any force emerging from the valley swing to its right.

The second or left column was also about 1,000 strong and consisted of *voltigeurs*. These advanced along the left bank of the stream and obtained some shelter from the trenches of the "left attack." This advance was supported by a brigade of infantry and only made a demonstration against the Jesus tower and walls adjacent. At the same time another brigade made a demonstration as if to attack from the north side of the Corchuela tower. The rain was falling in torrents when shortly before 9 o'clock in the morning the attack was launched. The valley is of deep alluvial soil and extremely soft and the grenadiers sank up to their knees at places and progress was very slow.¹ Needless to say that they were exposed to a tremendous musketry fire with a minor accompaniment of grape-shot from the Corchuela tower and the aimed fire of the Riflemen from the walls thirty feet above them, distant at the utmost 200 to 250 yards. Gough was in his glory ; it is said that he drew his sword and threw away the scabbard. The Band of the 87th struck up the Regimental March "Garry Owen" and the Irishmen plied their muskets vigorously. No praise can be too high for the gallantry of the Frenchmen who despite the havoc wrought in their ranks pressed on and reached the portcullis only to find it impassable. Here they were exposed to a shower of hand grenades flung over the walls.

An attempt was made to deploy and open fire and it is said that owing to this a few of the attackers came opposite the breach and ascended it, but on gaining the summit they were at once shot down. Certain it is that no serious attack was made on the breach. Exposed thus to a terrible frontal and flanking fire with no possibility of getting at the defenders, the survivors finally broke and fell back up the valley under cover of the hills.

¹ I visited the spot after heavy rains in December 1911 and can vouch for the extraordinary depth and tenacity of the mud. At places near the banks of the torrent it was knee-deep.

History of the Rifle Brigade

All readers of Napier will recall his description of the supreme moment of this truly gallant venture when the leader of the grenadiers, falling against the portcullis sorely wounded, surrendered his sword to Gough through its bars and how at the same moment "the French drummer, a gallant boy, beating the charge, fell lifeless at his side." Gough now called on the band to play "St. Patrick's Day" which so excited the men of the 87th that they could scarcely be restrained from sallying out in pursuit.

When the column recoiled from the attack a few wounded officers pushed up to the walls where they were sheltered from fire. These of course had to surrender and it is noteworthy that of ten officers thus taken only one survived his wounds. Skerrett very humanely allowed Leval to remove his wounded who covered the ground outside the walls.

The British losses in this affair were naturally small, only two officers and seven men killed and three officers and twenty-two men wounded. The 95th had only one Rifleman killed and one wounded. The Spaniards had one officer killed and twenty men killed and wounded. The losses of the French are unknown. Leval reported 207 casualties but it is known that the Sappers who led the column lost forty-three out of fifty and that the four companies of the 51st *Ligne* had seven officers and eighty-one men hit,¹ and there is no reason to believe that these corps suffered more than the rest of the attackers.

After this failure the French remained in their miserable camp exposed to the most terrible weather. The mountain torrents had cut off all communication with Vejer and they were literally starving. In fact the conditions of life of the besiegers were absolutely insupportable, bivouacked as they were in a muddy valley without shelter, food or fuel. Owing to cold, wet, starvation and exposure, hundreds had fallen sick and many had died during the short period they had been in front of the old fortress.

¹ Oman, vol. v, p. 127, note.

Leval wanted to retire but Victor insisted on another attempt being made and on the night of 2 January 1812 a bombardment against the walls near the Jesus tower was begun but produced little effect. On the following night, the rain having recommenced, Victor reluctantly raised the siege. Throughout the 4th he strove to remove some of his material. All the vehicles save a few, reserved to carry off the wounded, were burnt and the ammunition and stores destroyed. It was however quite impossible to drag away the four heavy 16-pounders which were spiked and rendered useless by knocking off a trunnion.

During the night of the 5th the French retired from their lines, leaving a rear-guard which successfully held off an attempt of the Allies to follow in pursuit. Crossing the plain of Tarifa the four howitzers and a 12-pounder had to be abandoned and only three 12-pounders reached the Torre de la Peña. The weather was very rough, yet when the column was passing below the Torre, an irrepressible British frigate ran in-shore and fired at the luckless Frenchmen. The expedition had cost Victor about 500 lives, largely from sickness and exposure, also nine guns, with all the ammunition, siege-train vehicles and war material.

That the defenders deserve credit for their determination to hold what was practically an open town is undeniable but those who took part in the defence are agreed that the terrible conditions of the weather were a most important factor in their favour.

Wellington writing to Lord Liverpool before he had received news of Victor's failure before Tarifa said "From accounts I have received of that place it appears to me quite impossible to defend it when the enemy shall be equipped to attack it. The utmost that can be done is to hold the island contiguous to Tarifa"¹ Upon receiving news of the successful defence he wrote, also to Lord Liverpool, "I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration of the conduct of Colonel Skerrett and the brave troops under his command."²

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 9 Jan. 1812.

² *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 21 Jan. 1812.

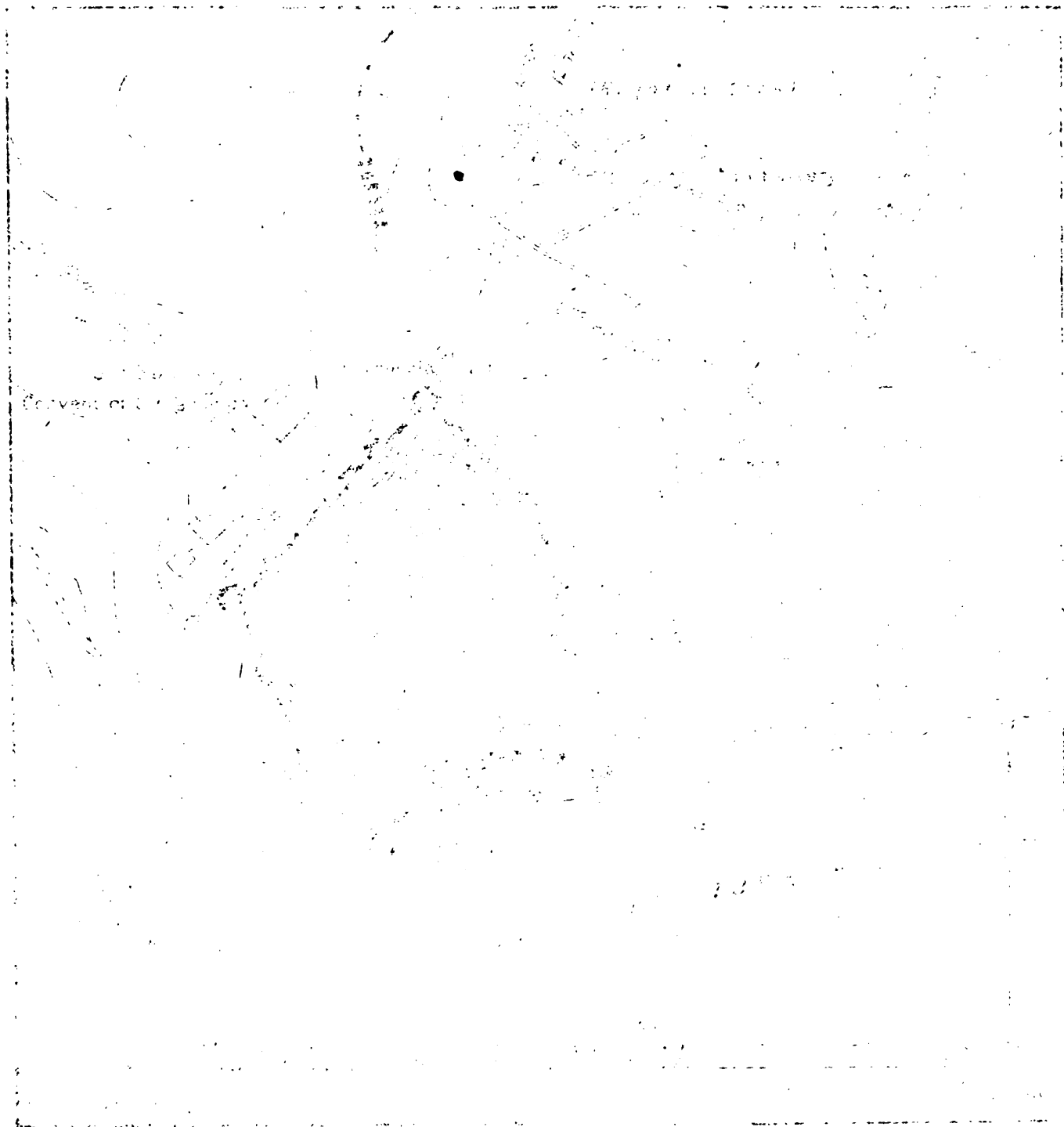
Again, writing to Major-General Cooke commanding at Cadiz he says—"We have a right to expect that His Majesty's Officers will perform their duty on every occasion but we had no right to expect that comparatively a small number would be able to hold the town of Tarifa commanded as it is at short distances and enfiladed in every direction, and unprovided with artillery and with walls scarcely cannon proof."¹ Napier in his *History* describes the Defence of Tarifa as "a great and splendid exploit." Some may think this an exaggeration but from the previous extracts from Wellington's despatches it is clear that he himself viewed it as a very fine military performance, and for most people that is sufficient. Only one Company of the 95th Rifles was present in this little expedition; the whole force however was a very small one, only some 1500 British infantry, so that the proportion of rifles to muskets was much as usual. That the Rifles did their duty and did it well both before and during the siege is shown by Skerrett's General Order issued on 9 Jan. 1812. Alluding to the reconnaissance of 20 December 1811, he says that his thanks are due "To Captain Jenkins and his Company of the 95th Regt. who at the same time advanced against a very superior force of the enemy's light troops with distinguished gallantry and drove them back, keeping them in check during the time the guns were in action. Had Captain Jenkins been allowed to advance, his Company alone would probably have taken the enemy's field-pieces in front of them."²

With the retreat of the French from Tarifa ends what may for convenience be called the campaigns of 1811.

In this chapter I have dealt now and again with matters somewhat outside of the general history of the Regiment, but it is well to bear in mind that it was mainly owing to Suchet's desperate efforts to subjugate the Province of Valencia in accordance with Napoleon's peremptory

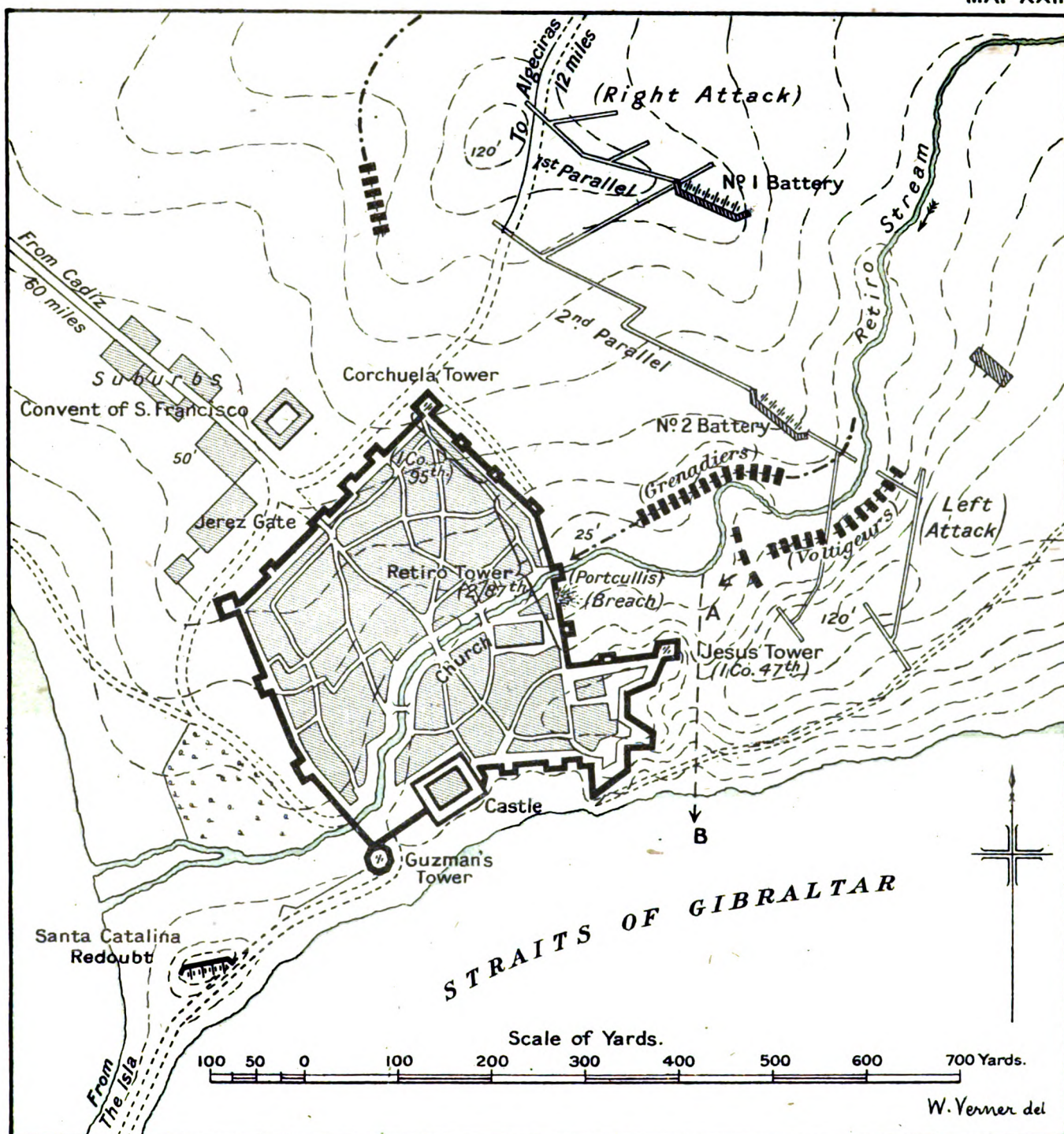
¹ *Well. Desp.* To Cooke, 1 Feb. 1812.

² P. R. O. W. O. 1, vol. 225.



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ROUGH SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE THE SIEGE OF TARIFA, Dec. 1811—Jan. 1812.

Compiled from various old Plans and from sketches and notes made during visits in 1911-1915.

The form-lines indicate the general run of the ground.

The dotted line A B shows where the Retiro Stream now runs to the sea through a tunnel.

DEFENCE OF TARIFA

orders, coupled with Soult's attempt to take Tarifa, which enabled Wellington to make his sudden and successful attack on Ciudad Rodrigo in January 1812. Further, it was the general weakening of the French forces in the Peninsula to provide for the requirements of the coming Russian Campaign which gave Wellington the opportunity a few months later to hurl his forces on Badajoz and thus possess himself of the two fortresses which had hitherto barred his advance from the frontiers of Portugal.

CHAPTER XV.

STORM OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND DEATH OF ROBERT
CRAUFURD, 1812.

Wellington reorganizes his transport—His dispositions for the siege—Description of the Fortress—A mid-winter Campaign—The attack on the Renaud redoubt—Successful *coup-de-main* by Colborne—Losses of the Rifles—The French Captain's "lesson in English"—The Light Division on trench-duty—The icy waters of the Agueda—The Garrison make a sortie—The British batteries open fire—Riflemen in the advanced saps—The "Highland Company" on trench-guard—The walls are breached—The Light Division ordered up—Wellington's general plan of attack—His orders for the Storm—Craufurd issues his orders—Simmons and the ladders—The Light Division storm the Lesser Breach—Craufurd mortally wounded—The 3rd Division storm the Great Breach—Capture of the Fortress—The orgie of pillage and plunder—Order restored—The Rifles march out—An unrecognizable Corps—Losses of the Rifles—Total losses of the British and French—Captain Uniacke's death—Craufurd's last hours—His funeral—The tribute of the Light Division to his memory—Wellington's testimony—A great trainer and leader of men.

THE year 1812 opened well for the British Army in Spain. Wellington had received considerable reinforcements during the preceding months, but unfortunately there was an extraordinary amount of sickness among the troops and especially among those newly-arrived from England and once again the terrible after-results of the Walcheren fever were apparent. "It is melancholy to see the effects which the Walcheren fever has had on the constitution of both officers and soldiers" he writes to Lord Liverpool in September 1811.¹ At this time there were no less than 17,000 men in hospital. In spite of this

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 11 Sept. and 2 Oct. 1811.

by 1 January 1812 there were 38,000 British troops and 22,000 Portuguese present and fit for duty.

Wellington's first task with a view to his projected advance was to reorganize his transport and this he did most effectually. The mule transport, which owing to the roadless condition of the Peninsula was the mainstay of the operations, had to be carefully organized and maintained. This was put into a high state of efficiency. 10,000 commissariat mules were required to supply some 53,000 men, each mule carrying 200 lbs. weight for the "public" besides 30 lbs. for his own corn for six days. The details were splendidly worked out and are to be found in Wellington's instructions to his Commissary General, Mr. Bissett.¹ In addition to the mules Wellington created a most effective wheeled transport, replacing the wretched Portuguese carts by specially constructed bullock carts. Many of these were made in Portugal and the remainder in England. Each cart was drawn by two bullocks and 25 carts made a "brigade," whilst 50 made a "division." Eventually some 800 of these commissariat carts were at work.

Wellington's plans for the opening of the campaign in 1812 were based mainly on his knowledge that Marmont with most of his force was still in the valley of the Tagus and that Dorsenne was in the north. He received during the month of December 1811 various reports of the movements of portions of Marmont's force from the Upper Tagus on Cuenca to support Suchet and, later, he heard of the march of the Imperial Guard from Valladolid towards France and of other troops eastward. The result of his deductions as to the general distribution of the enemy's forces caused him to prepare for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo with all possible speed.

During the opening days of January he built a trestle-bridge across the Agueda at Marialva and brought forward his siege-train and

¹ *Well. Desp.* Memo. to Commissary General, 20 Nov. 1811.

materials. On 4 January the British army took up its position for the investment of the fortress. The Light Division re-crossed the Agueda and occupied the villages of Pastores, La Encina and El Bodon on the left bank ; the 4th Division crossed the Agueda and occupied San Felices el Chico, the 3rd Division went to Martiago and Zamarra on the right bank of the Agueda whilst the 1st Division occupied Espeja and Gallegos. The 5th and 6th Divisions crossed the Coa near Alameda and the 7th moved on Fuente Guinaldo. Hill had been engaged on another raid into Estremadura since 27 December in which he had caused d'Erlon no little anxiety and Soult some alarm. Wellington now recalled him to take up a position between Portalegre and Castello Branco whence he could watch the French movements in Lower Beira.

See
Map XXIII,
p. 352.

The fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo stands on a low hill close to the right bank of the Agueda and about 150 feet above the stream. The town itself is of the usual Spanish type, a maze of narrow streets, and is surrounded by ramparts and an ancient wall thirty-two feet in height. Outside the wall is a more modern *fausse-braie*, a low continuous outwork, of bastion-trace on its eastern side and with indented lines affording flank-defence on the northern and western sides. The *fausse-braie* being set low down on the hill-side is of small protection to the walls. It has no covered way and the glacis slopes very steeply. Along the southern side the ground falls sharply to the river bank. There is a ditch outside the *fausse-braie* with the masonry counterscarp twelve feet in height. About 200 yards north of the fortress there is a long low ridge parallel to the walls known as the Little Teson or Teso.¹ A small stream runs parallel to this hill at the foot of the glacis. About 400 yards north of the Little Teson and separated from it by another small stream there is a second ridge larger and higher than the first called the Great Teson or Teso.

¹ *Teso* = the brow or crest of a ridge.

This ridge stands about thirteen feet higher than the ramparts of the town and the French, recognizing the danger it was to the fortress, had thrown up a redoubt on it in the form of a redan, which they named after the late Governor, Renaud, protected by a ditch seven feet deep and eight feet wide, with its rear closed by a loop-holed brick wall. The foot of the counterscarp was palisaded and the wall in rear was defended by chevaux de frise; two guns and a howitzer were mounted in it. This little advanced-work was protected on its right by two guns placed on the flat roof of a house about 400 yards off in the San Francisco suburb east of the fortress, two more guns at 700 yards range being placed in the fortified Convent of Santa Cruz, 200 yards west of the town. Across the river and connected with the fortress by the bridge was a second suburb and both it and San Francisco had been placed in a good state of defence and were protected by the guns of the place.¹

There was an ample supply of guns and ammunition for withstanding a siege, for in addition to the normal armament Marmont had left within it the whole of the siege-train belonging to the Army of Portugal. The place was not well-victualled owing to the great difficulties of obtaining supplies. The garrison consisted of about 2,000 of all ranks; this number had been reduced by losses and sickness at the time of the siege to 1818 fit for duty.

Such, broadly, was the place which Wellington had set himself to capture. We will now see how the task was carried out. For various reasons but mainly because the ground around the fortress on the other sides was rocky and otherwise bad for siege-approaches Wellington decided to make his attack from the northern side. To do this it was necessary that the redoubt on the Great Teson should first be captured.

¹ All these details are from Sir John T. Jones's *Journals of Sieges*, vol. i, pp. 107-109.

We have seen how the Light Division on the morning of the 4th was ordered to cross to the left bank of the Agueda. Their experiences on this day are a sample of what the British soldier had to undergo during this mid-winter campaign in Spain. It was a bitterly cold day with persistent heavy rain and the Agueda was found to be in flood, taking our men nearly up to the shoulders. By putting their pouches on top of their knapsacks they managed to keep their ammunition dry but such was the force of the current that they were obliged to lay hold of one another so as to prevent the torrent sweeping them away. It took some time to find quarters and all ranks were huddled together, wet to the skin, many of them in wretched hovels. On the following day better arrangements were made and the Companies were housed separately.

About two weeks before this the regiments had been ordered to make gabions and fascines. This was the first inkling that anybody had of the impending siege. Yet even this did not cause much comment for it was popularly believed that the order was merely given to keep the enemy on the *qui vive*. The idea that Wellington would besiege Ciudad Rodrigo while there was somewhere in the neighbourhood a powerful enemy like Marmont, whom only quite recently he had been too weak to fight, save in a selected position, seems to have never entered the heads of the regimental officers. In fact so well did Wellington keep his intentions secret that few seem to have realized until the last moment what was in store for them.¹

On 8 January the Light Division paraded before daylight and forded the Agueda at the ford of Cantarrenas about three miles north of Pastores near the Convent of La Caridad. The river was now only knee-deep but the water was intensely cold. The Division marched east of the suburb of San Francisco out of range of the guns of the

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 252.

fortress and halted behind a hill north of the town. Upon the Light Division halting, several French officers came out of the redoubt and under shelter of a wall approached to "within half musket shot" and amused themselves by saluting and bowing to our officers evidently anxious to know what it all meant.¹ During the day there was some cannonading from the fortress, as the various Divisions took up their appointed positions to invest it. It was not long before both the French and the men of the Light Division learnt the object of their march, for Wellington, whose main factor was rapidity of action, realizing that to lay siege to the Renaud redoubt might delay the attack on the fortress a week, had decided to take it right away by a coup de main. To do this he ordered the Light Division to furnish a party under Lieutenant-Colonel Colborne² of the 52nd, who was one of the foremost of the many forward men of the Light Division. The force given him was ten companies namely two of the 43rd, two from each of the Battalions of the 52nd, and two of the Rifles with one company from each of the Caçador Regiments.³

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 101. Simmons, p. 218.

² Afterwards Field Marshal Lord Seaton, G.C.B., Colonel-in-Chief, Rifle Brigade, 1861-1863. Died 18 April 1863.

³ The composition of this small force of Colborne's has been variously stated. Sir William Cope who knew some of the actors mentions particularly *three* companies of the 95th with the details I have given here. Another point is the number of the stormers, which is variously given from 300 to 450. All the Regimental Diaries say from 300 to 360. Thus Leach says "300 men from the 43rd, 52nd, 95th and 3rd Portuguese Caçadores" whilst Simmons says "360 men from the 43rd, 52nd and 95th (Rifle Men)." Kincaid gives "A hundred volunteers from each Regiment" and Lieutenant John Cox says "A detachment from the Light Division of 120 men of the 43rd, 52nd and 95th Rifles, making 360 volunteers under Lieut.-Colonel Colborne stormed the redoubt." This last is most specific. All four of these officers were present. Moorson, quoting a letter written to him by Lord Seaton in 1859, says "The detachments were *not* volunteers they were companies commanded by the senior Captains of each battalion; two from the 43rd, four from the 52nd, two from the 95th and one from each of the Portuguese battalions." (*History of the 52nd*, p. 150.) It would thus seem that although Colborne was given ten companies (roughly 650 to 700 men) he detailed four Companies to form his storming party.

Colborne's scheme for the attack was as follows : Four companies were extended to cover the front of and to crown the edge of the glacis. These were Captain Crampton's Company of the 1st Battalion 95th followed by Captain Travers's Company of the 3rd Battalion and another Company of the 1st Battalion under Lieutenant Macnamara, the fourth Company being one of the 52nd.¹ Then came the ladder party followed by the main body of the stormers. The exact direction of the salient angle of the redoubt was marked by an officer and two Sergeants of the Rifles who advanced before dark to the brow of the Teson and placed themselves in alignment with the steeple of the Cathedral. So quietly did our men move that it was not until they were within fifty yards of the work that their presence was detected. Colborne now shouted the order to break into "double-quick" time and the whole dashed forward, the Riflemen and 52nd inclining outwards and encircling the work along the crest of the glacis whence they poured in a furious fire at close range on the defenders as they rushed up to man their parapet. As it was the French only had time to fire their guns once before the fire from the covering-party drove them to seek cover. Three companies of the 43rd and 52nd now came up and with the aid of fascines bridged from the glacis to the palisades or fraises and the stormers descended into the ditch. About this time the attackers suffered some loss due to hand-grenades and live shells being flung over the parapet by the French. The escarp was not revetted and once over the fraises the assailants, scrambling up, entered the redoubt. At the same moment some of the 52nd who had worked round the rear entered by the gateway in the wall closing

¹ Fortescue (vol. viii, p. 352, *Note*) says the four Companies of the covering-party which led the way were "apparently two of the 52nd and two of the 43rd." The detail of the Companies of the 95th is however known and is given above. Possibly Fortescue's note applies to the composition of the storming party, which consisted of the 43rd and 52nd.

the gorge, the gate having been accidentally destroyed by a shell which rolled down against it and burst. In a few minutes the place was ours. Of the garrison three were killed and about fifteen wounded whilst two officers and forty-eight unwounded men were taken prisoners, only four out of the garrison making good their escape.¹ The two guns and howitzers were of course captured.

The losses of the Light Division were six men killed and three officers and seventeen men wounded. That of the Rifles was one officer, Lieutenant Rutherford Hawksley mortally wounded (he died three days later), and one Rifleman killed and seven wounded. The whole of the casualties according to Colborne took place during the rush on the ditch and in the passage of it. It was a most brilliant little affair and its success was largely due to Colborne's fine leading.

The garrison now opened a heavy artillery fire on the interior of the redoubt with shot and shell, but Colborne had pushed on his force to a small stream in the hollow south of the hill where they were in complete safety, and acted as a covering-party. Meanwhile working parties were set to work at once and soon opened out 150 yards of the old trench-work about 600 yards from the place made in 1810 by the French whilst others made communication trenches across the summit of the Great Tesson to the Engineers' depot beyond and by daylight on the 9th the work was well advanced, being excavated three feet deep and four feet wide and giving complete cover to our men.

The French officer in command of the captured redoubt is described as being "a chattering little fellow" and admitted to his captors that he had been among the party who had come out and saluted the British troops on the preceding day. Kincaid says that he kept incessantly repeating a few words of English which he had picked up during the assault, to wit "dem eyes" "b—t eyes." These Kincaid suggests

¹ Belmas iv, p. 266.

were probably about the only words that were spoken.¹ The luckless little Frenchman had been stripped by the Portuguese, the fate of all who fell into their hands. In this condition and bleeding from the nose and mouth he was brought before Craufurd who expressed his regret at the occurrence and at having no clothes to give him. Upon this a Private Rifleman by name Tom Crawley, a notorious character in the 1st Battalion, many of whose deeds and escapades have been handed down in the Regiment, stepped forward and saluting said "He may have my great coat, your honour." Craufurd who was much pleased said "You are very good, Rifleman, let him have it." An unfortunate Sergeant who had been similarly maltreated by the Portuguese was brought in about the same time and seeing the Captain he embraced him and burst into tears. Harry Smith, then on Craufurd's Staff, gave him his handkerchief, all that could be provided.²

On the morning of the 9th the 1st Division relieved the Light Division who returned to their quarters across the Agueda. On this day Craufurd had his horse killed under him by a round-shot.³

The four Divisions engaged in the investment relieved one another in the trenches about 10 a.m., every twenty-four hours; thus the 4th Division relieved the 1st on 10 January and the 3rd relieved the 4th on the 11th. On the 12th the Light Division had their second spell. The weather was bad, a bitter wind and hard frost and the ford across the Agueda was up to the waist which resulted in every man carrying "a pair of iced breeches" into the trenches and in this state they had to remain until relieved the following morning. The bulk of the Riflemen were with the working parties; others were with the covering-party, whence some were sent on to get as close as possible to the fortress and dig rifle pits. During the preceding three days the

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 101.

² Costello, *Adventures*, p. 93.

³ Leach, *MS. Journal*.

1st parallel had been completed and three batteries were well advanced with parapets eighteen feet thick at the top. Gun-platforms had been laid and expense magazines covered with splinter-proofs. The work had been seriously retarded owing to a mistake in laying out the left battery in the dark, part of which was found to be masked by the redoubt and in consequence useless. The French had ascertained the exact position of the batteries under construction and caused much destruction by firing salvoes of shells with long fuzes into them.

This fire was peculiarly destructive on the 12th; in consequence on the evening of the 13th, under cover of a dense fog, the Rifles were ordered to send out parties to approach the fortress and to keep down the fire of the artillery by picking off the gunners. Kincaid was in command of one of these parties and describes how at 8 p.m. he took thirty Riflemen with shovels who crawled up the glacis and dug rifle-pits whence they could command the embrasures. The enemy soon found out their persecutors and threw fire-balls among the crouching Riflemen to try to locate them. When one of these projectiles arrived all hands lay low until the blaze died away when they resumed their murderous task with effect. On the following morning during the return march to cantonments the Agueda was found to be full of blocks of ice which made the passage doubly unpleasant. Craufurd sent some of his cavalry to form up across the stream above the ford and thus in some measure protect the infantry passing below. It must have been an unpleasant "fatigue" especially for the unfortunate horses.

It was on this day that Wellington, who was daily expecting to hear that Marmont was collecting his forces to relieve the place, decided with the advice of Colonel Fletcher his chief Engineer to try to hasten its fall by breaching the walls from his batteries in the 1st parallel on the Great Teson, thereby saving the inevitable delays of carrying out the siege operations in the normal manner. He however at the same time ordered the approaches to a 2nd parallel to be put in

hand so that in the event of Marmont not concentrating to attack him, he might, if necessary, be able to continue the siege in more orthodox fashion.

We know now that Marmont had left Talavera on the 5th and arrived at Valladolid on the 11th where he joined Dorsenne and that neither of them had any idea of the gravity of the situation at Rodrigo until 15 January.

On the night of the 13th the work on the 2nd parallel was begun and pushed well forward. Since this advance brought the trenches close to the Convent of Santa Cruz, Wellington ordered that outwork to be stormed. This was done by 300 volunteers from the King's German Legion with a company of the 5th Battalion, 60th. The siege-guns, twenty-seven in number, which had arrived on the 11th were on this same night mounted in the three batteries on the Great Teson. General Barrié the Governor viewed with alarm this advance to the Little Teson and on the following day (the 14th) made a sortie with 500 of the garrison. He chose the time when the British reliefs were usually being carried out namely, 11 a.m. This was a bad arrangement on our part as all our movements could be seen and reported by French look-out officers in the tower of the Cathedral. The French made their attack suddenly and with great spirit at an opportune moment and quickly recaptured the Convent of Santa Cruz and dashed forward into the 2nd parallel where they did some damage. Fortunately an Engineer officer collected some men from the working parties of the 24th and 42nd Regiments and opened a fire which checked the French advance until the newly-arrived Division under General Graham came up, when the French retired to the town with small loss. That same afternoon at 4 o'clock the British batteries opened fire and continued till nightfall. After dark the 2nd parallel was re-occupied. The same night the big outwork of San Francisco was stormed by 300 men of the 40th Regiment and three guns captured. Barrié thereupon vacated the fortified suburb of San Francisco and also withdrew from the Santa Cruz Convent.

Throughout the 15th the British batteries continued their fire which was concentrated on the northern salient where Soult had breached it in 1810 and which it was reckoned was not so strong as the older walls. Both the main wall and that of the *fausse-braie* suffered severely and it was clear that breaches would soon be formed. During the night a more advanced battery for five guns was commenced on the Great Teson with the object of making a second breach 300 yards east of the main one and at the same time destroying some guns which might take in flank an attack on the main breach.

On the 16th a dense fog prevented our batteries continuing the bombardment. The 2nd parallel was however extended and more rifle pits established. On this day the Light Division took their third tour of duty in the trenches, and the rifle pits and 2nd parallel were occupied by some of our Riflemen who kept up an incessant fire on the embrasures and the breach. The approaches as they neared the fortress struck rocky ground and recourse had to be had to "flying sap." Parties were detailed to carry earth in gabions and plant them upon the advanced saps to protect the workers. The French replied with grape-shot and there were many casualties among our men. Simmons describes how he ran the gauntlet here several times and brought gabions of earth, "always leaving some of my poor fellows behind, when I returned for more and glad enough was I when the Engineer said 'We have now sufficient.'" Kincaid was ordered to join the covering party and to take command of the Highland Company¹ which

¹ This is one of the last references to the "Highland Company" in the Rifles which I have come across. From the earliest formation of the Rifle Corps in 1800 there was always a very strong Scotch element in it, no less than 181 out of the 290 Fencibles originally enlisted coming from north of the Tweed. (See Part I, p. 26.)

How long the "Highland Company" continued after 1812 I have been unable to find out. Alexander Cameron (afterwards Major-General Sir Alexander Cameron K.C.B.) who was one of the original officers of the Regiment and who came to it from the 92nd Highlanders appears to have commanded the Company from 1805 until promoted to Major in May 1812.

was under Major Cameron with the left wing. He found the Company on piquet between the right of the trenches and the Agueda posted in a mud cottage and in a half-ruined Convent close under the walls (no doubt some outbuildings of the Santa Cruz). The piquet was placed here to protect the right flank of the trenches from a sortie on the part of the enemy. Throughout the day the French kept up a heavy fire on the spot with grape and musketry, making it impossible for the men to show themselves. After a most disturbing twenty-four hours they were relieved on the following morning at 10 a.m. as usual, the relief being carried out by doubling the men across the shot-swept ground in parties of three and four at a time.

This unpleasant billet lay less than a quarter of a mile from the river and our men found out on this morning that, by running the gauntlet for this distance exposed to the fire of two pieces of artillery and thence making straight for their cantonments in place of returning round the fortress in rear of the hills near the San Francisco suburb, they could save between two and three miles march. Kincaid says that after the *furnace* they had lived in when on piquet the other *fire* was not considered a fire at all and so was passed without a moment's hesitation.

On the night of 16 January Wellington summoned the place to surrender but was refused. The next day, the 17th, the fog lifted about midday and the cannonade was resumed and there were many casualties and much damage done alike to the besiegers and the besieged. After nightfall the new advanced battery on the Great Teson was completed and at daylight on the 18th the British re-opened fire with thirty-two guns. Before sundown the great breach was opened out and considered practicable, whilst at the second point attacked an old tower fell forward "like an avalanche" (in the words of the Governor, Barrié), making a second but perfectly practicable breach although a narrow one. Meanwhile a new battery was being made in rear of the 2nd parallel on the Little Teson, and after dark a gun and

a howitzer were placed there and kept up a fire on the main breach throughout the night to prevent the French from retrenching it. On the 19th the bombardment was resumed with great effect and Wellington after reconnoitring the place issued his orders for the attack. Since the Light Division had only come off duty on the 17th it was not "for it" again until the 20th; when therefore the order was issued for it to march to the trenches on the 19th there was a shrewd suspicion that something big was near at hand. The 4th Division had relieved the 1st on the 18th and in ordinary course were due to be relieved by the 3rd Division on the 19th Wellington however had decided to use both the 3rd Division and the Light Division for the impending Storm, the 4th Division being held in reserve. Two days earlier, on the 17th, it had become apparent to many officers that there was a possibility of Wellington cutting short the siege and attempting to storm the place. The idea of this set many of the more "forward" men in a ferment, since there would be a call for volunteers for the storming party. No words can give a better idea of the intensely martial spirit of our Army in the Peninsula than to read how whenever volunteers for a "forlorn hope" were called for, all ranks clamoured to be allowed to join the select few in a task which presented every possible chance of a speedy death with little or no chance of honour or reward. For, although a subaltern who led a "forlorn hope" might reckon on death or a Company, or a Field Officer, if he survived, could reckon on a brevet-step, for all other ranks, officers, non-commissioned officers and men alike there was no prospect of advancement, for no reward was ever given. It must be remembered that war-medals as we know them did not then exist, so that there was not even the chance of a "clasp" to add to a decoration. None the less there were as many applicants for a place in the ranks of the "forlorn hope" as if it led to the highest honours and rewards.¹

¹ No doubt it was the feeling among the officers that the men who had so distinguished themselves at Copenhagen, Monte Video, Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz

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In the case in point no sooner was it clear to the officers that the fortress was to be stormed than Major George Napier of the 52nd besought Craufurd to be allowed to command the storming party whilst Lieutenant Gurwood of the same corps at the same time asked to be given the "forlorn hope." Their Colonel, Colborne, recommended the applications but no reply was received from Craufurd. On the morning of the 19th however on the march to the trenches when near La Caridad¹ Craufurd received his orders from Wellington for the assault that night. He at once halted the Division and desired Napier to get 100 volunteers from each British Regiment, with a proportion of officers and to form them up in front of the Division and take command of them in order to lead the assault.

Napier says : "I went to the three Regiments, viz., the 43rd, 52nd and Rifle Corps and said 'Soldiers, I have the honour to be appointed to the command of the storming party which is to lead the Light Division to the assault of the small breach. I want 100 volunteers from each Regiment—those who will go with me come forward.' Instantly there rushed out nearly half the Division and we were obliged to take them by chance."²

Wellington's orders for the Storm were as follows : The main breach was to be attacked by the 3rd Division (Picton's) issuing from the 1st parallel. One brigade (Campbell's) was to advance from behind the Santa Cruz Convent in two columns. The right of these (the 5th Regiment) was to effect an entrance into the outer ditch at the gateway

and San Sebastian and other occasions had received no official recognition of their fine services and gallantry which led to the introduction of what are known as "Regimental Medals." I hope to deal with this subject at some later period of this History since from time to time I have come across fine examples of these medals given thus unofficially to non-commissioned officers and Private Riflemen by their officers.

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Liverpool, 20 January 1812, note by Lieutenant-Colonel Gurwood, p. 551.

² Napier. *Early Military Life of General Sir George T. Napier*, p. 179.

north of the Castle Gate and, after mounting the wall of the *fausse-braie* by means of the 25-foot ladders they carried, to sweep along it to the left to the main breach. The light company of the 83rd Regiment and the 2nd Caçadores were to cross the Agueda by the bridge from the suburb and escalate and capture a small outwork below the Castle whence the fire of the guns might interfere with the attack of the 5th. The other column (the 94th Regiment) also advancing from the Santa Cruz Convent was to descend into the outer ditch by means of 12-foot ladders at a point between the gateway and the main breach and sweep along it to its left and clear it; both the 5th and 94th thus eventually joining the right of the attack on the main breach. This was to be made by Mackinnon's Brigade moving out straight from the 2nd parallel. Mackinnon's advance was to be covered by the fire of the 83rd Regiment from the 2nd parallel and was to be preceded by 180 Sappers carrying bags containing hay to throw into the ditch to break the fall of the men as they descended into it. It was to be protected on its left flank by some Companies of our Riflemen.

To the Light Division was assigned the task of storming the lesser breach. Craufurd was ordered to form up his Division in rear of the San Francisco Convent and to send three Companies of the 95th Rifles, provided with three 12-foot ladders, to descend into the ditch midway between the two breaches. These Companies were to carry ten axes with which to destroy any defences or obstacles and working to their right were to clear the ditch up to Mackinnon's left at the main breach as already mentioned. Vandeleur's Brigade was to issue from the right of the San Francisco Convent and was to carry twelve 12-foot ladders and to descend into the ditch to the right of the small breach, passing to the left of small ravelin and to make for the top of the breach. On gaining the *fausse-braie* they were to detach five companies to the right and assist Mackinnon's attack. The main body, on gaining the summit of the main walls, was to do the same. Barnard's Brigade was to form up

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behind the San Francisco Convent in support. All the columns were to detail parties to keep down the fire of the enemy and Wellington particularly ordered that "The men with the ladders, and axes, and bags must not have arms, those who storm must not fire."¹ Finally there were to be false attacks by Pack's Portuguese on the San Pelayo² Gate and another point. The assault was to take place at 7 p.m.

We will now see what were Craufurd's orders, the last he was ever to issue, for the Light Division. Vandeleur's Brigade was ordered to form up as follows.

(1) Four Companies of the 1st Battalion 95th Rifles under Major Cameron to line the crest of the glacis and fire on the rampart.

(2) One hundred and sixty men of the 3rd Caçadores carrying hay and straw bags, twelve 12-foot ladders and some axes.

(3) The "forlorn hope" consisting of an officer and twenty-five volunteers under Lieutenant Gurwood of the 52nd.

(4) The storming party; three officers and 100 volunteers from the 43rd, 52nd, and Rifles under Major George Napier of the 52nd.

(5) The main body of the Division under Craufurd consisting of the remainder of Vandeleur's Brigade, namely the two Battalions of the 52nd and some Companies of the Rifles.

(6) Barnard's Brigade, consisting of the 43rd, some Companies of the Rifles and the 1st Caçadores to remain in reserve and to close on Vandeleur's Brigade when it reached the breach.

Barnard was to detail four Companies of the Rifles to man the 2nd parallel at 180 yards from the walls and keep up a sharp fire on the defenders.

The Light Division formed up north of the walls of the San Francisco Convent at nightfall and whilst waiting for orders to advance

¹ *Supp. Desp.*, vol. vii, pp. 253-55.

² Called "Santiago Gate" in the Orders.

Harry Smith who was Brigade Major to Craufurd came up to some of the Rifle officers and said "One of you must come and take charge of some ladders if required." Simmons at once volunteered and taking some men went to the Engineers' camp. He was handed over some ladders. On his return he took them up to Craufurd, who was with the advance, and who according to his account attacked him in a most ungracious manner saying "Why do you bring these short ladders?" To this Simmons replied that he had been ordered by the Engineer to take them. "Go back, Sir! and get others. I am astonished at such stupidity." Poor Simmons was sadly crestfallen but admits that it was what he "deserved for over zeal." On his return he met a Portuguese Captain and handed the ladders over to his company, apparently without orders to do so. Knowing as we now do more about the walls to be escalated, apparently Wellington's order for the 12-foot ladders for Vandeleur's Brigade should have been for 25-foot ladders. Anyway the Engineer officer and Simmons were simply obeying Wellington's orders but Craufurd had realized that longer ladders might be required. Just before moving off Craufurd, who led the column in person, addressed the men. It is on record that his voice was a singularly clear one and that on this memorable occasion it was more than ordinarily clear and distinct. "Soldiers" he said "The eyes of your Country are upon you. Be steady, be cool, be firm in the assault. The town must be yours this night. Once masters of the wall, let your first duty be to clear the ramparts, and in doing this keep together." Then he added "Now lads for the breach," and led the way.¹

The actual extent of open ground to be crossed by the Light Division was about three hundred yards and the stormers, who would not wait for the Portuguese detailed to carry the hay bags, some of whom were late in coming up, raced up the glacis with great swiftness

¹ Costello. *Adventures*, p. 96.

and jumping down the counterscarp, a depth of twelve feet, into the ditch surged up the exterior slope of the *fausse-braie*. Owing to their first advance not having been observed by the defenders the attackers suffered little loss until they gained the ditch, when a furious fire of grape-shot and musketry met them. The forlorn hope inclining too much to the left escalated a traverse by mistake and had to descend. The stormers however made straight for the breach which was so narrow at the top that a dismounted gun placed across it almost closed it. A single gun had been posted so as to sweep the breach and this being fired at close quarters the blast of grape-shot struck down Napier. Colborne and other officers also fell wounded. The survivors passed on and, led by Captain Uniacke and Lieutenants Johnston and Kincaid of the 95th, gained the top and "with a furious shout, the breach was carried and our men swept into the place." Meanwhile death had been busy among the assailants. When the columns of the Light Division advanced to the assault Craufurd had kept on their left and reached the edge of the glacis about sixty yards to the left of the point where they had descended into the ditch. Here he remained, continuing to give his instructions "at the highest pitch of his voice." This brought upon him an intense fire of musketry from the parapets of the *fausse-braie* and ramparts opposite and at a very short distance, for the ditches both of the *fausse-braie* and of the main ditch were alike very narrow at this point and the place had no covered-way. He was struck by a musket-ball which "passed through his arm, broke through his ribs passed through part of his lungs and lodged in or at his spine. The shock was so great that on falling he rolled over down the glacis." Shaw Kennedy¹ who was his A.D.C. says that no one was near them and that he "half dragged and half carried him to a spot where an inequality of ground protected him from the direct

¹ Afterwards General Sir James Shaw Kennedy who in 1861 wrote the account of Craufurd's death from which this is taken.

fire from the place." Almost at the same instant Vandeleur was struck down and the command of the Light Division devolved on Barnard who pushed on without a check. As the supporting Regiments came up in sections abreast, the 52nd wheeled to the left, the 43rd and Rifles to the right, and cleared the ramparts as ordered.

I will now briefly follow out what Picton's men had meanwhile accomplished. The 5th and 94th alike carried out their tasks so rapidly that they swept both *fausse-braie* and ditch clear of the enemy up to the great breach, actually arriving there before Mackinnon's column. The latter had rough ground to traverse and, since it came by the route the French expected, drew a very severe fire and suffered heavily. Upon mounting to the top of the breach a sheer drop of sixteen feet into the town was found ; beyond this was a solidly built retrenchment the space between being garnished with obstacles such as crow's feet, iron spikes, &c., whilst on either side of the breach were deep cuts through the rampart with parapets behind them. Two guns, 24 pounders, mounted above these swept away the assailants by volleys of grape-shot. A mine was now fired lower down the breach which momentarily checked the attackers. The side parapets were however surmounted after desperate fighting with the greatest gallantry. The defenders now gave way on both sides of the breach and immediately afterwards a second mine higher up the breach was exploded which killed the gallant Mackinnon and many of our men in the moment of victory.

For many years subsequently there was some discussion as to whether the 3rd Division carried the Great Breach *before* the 43rd and Rifles took the defenders of it in flank as stated by Napier, Harry Smith and others or *after* it had been stormed. There can be no question that the Light Division entered the town before the 3rd Division for the latter had a much severer task. But the fact that the explosion of the second mine, which killed Mackinnon, taking place when the Frenchmen were already retiring, also mortally wounded Uniacke of the Rifles and several of our

men who had fought their way along the ramparts to lend a hand to Picton's men shows that the difference in time must have been very small.¹

After the walls were carried there was but little more fighting. Most of the defenders made their way to the Plaza near the Castle and laid down their arms there. The Portuguese minor attack had likewise succeeded. The Governor took refuge in the Castle but shortly surrendered his sword to Lieutenant Gurwood.²

The orgie of pillage and plunder which followed has ever been viewed as one of the greatest slurs on the discipline of the British Army. Yet there is much to be said on the subject by those who know and understand soldiers and who have studied military history. Fortescue in his *History* points out that until we stormed Badajoz no British Army had ever been engaged in such an undertaking in Europe since the days of Cromwell in Ireland. No orders were issued or arrangements made by those in authority for keeping the men in hand after a successful assault and once the men had got fairly scattered amid the old Spanish town—a veritable rabbit-warren—it was hopeless to attempt to get them together. Undoubtedly at this time every regiment contained a percentage of desperately bad characters and these, aided by those who could not resist the abundance of drink to be found everywhere, broke through all order and discipline.

Yet things were not altogether so bad as some have striven to prove. Leach who was a martinet says boldly that “no town taken by assault ever did or ever will suffer less than Rodrigo.”

¹ Oman, vol. v, pp. 181-183, and notes.

² This episode has given rise to another controversy, Lieutenant Mackie of the 88th who led the Forlorn Hope of the 3rd Division having also claimed the honour. It seems certain that Mackie reached the Castle *first* and was handed *a* sword first, but that Gurwood obtained General Barrié's sword and offered it to Wellington who mentioned him in despatches for it. Harry Smith (vol. i, p. 58) says “Gurwood got credit here unfairly.”

Apart from the ill-conduct of a few scoundrels, he asserts that he never heard that the surrendered garrison or the inhabitants suffered personal indignities or cruelties from the troops. "True it is that at one time a sort of dementia seems to have seized upon the madly excited victors who came rushing into the Grand Square from all directions. Apparently some were under the belief that they had been fired at from the windows, since some of them were seen to shoot at the houses whilst others commenced firing at anything or nothing and some lives were lost. Now it was that "the voice of Sir Thomas Picton, with the power of twenty trumpets, began to proclaim damnation to everybody" whilst Colonel Barnard, Colonel Cameron and some other active officers, were carrying it into effect with a strong hand ; for, seizing the broken barrels of muskets, which were lying about in great abundance (owing to the French having "downed arms" at this spot) "belaboured every fellow most unmercifully about the head who attempted either to load or fire."¹

Colonel Macleod of the 43rd alone kept his Battalion together for some time. There were however degrees of misconduct. A few houses were set on fire by drunken soldiers who were looting them but the bulk of the men were content to get all the drink and food they could and then possess themselves of anything which struck their fancy, no matter how useless or incongruous it might be for men in their position and leading the lives they did.

It was mainly owing to the exertions of Barnard that although the houses in the Plaza which had been set on fire during the riotous scenes were destroyed, the flames were prevented from spreading further. It is at least some small consolation for those who hold the name and fame of the Rifles so jealously in esteem that in spite of many deplorable incidents which undoubtedly occurred, by one o'clock in the morning, namely within four hours of the capture of the place, Barnard had got

¹ Kincaid. *Adventures*, p. 115.

the bulk of the Regiment together and, forming them up on the ramparts, kindled fires round which they sat or lay down and slept.

At 9 a.m. the Light Division marched out of the town and on their way back to cantonments met the 5th Division who had been ordered up to bury the dead and put the works in order. At the moment when the Rifles were emerging from the gateway of the Fortress Wellington happened to be riding in and had the curiosity to ask the officers of the leading Company *what Regiment it was?* Nor was the question unreasonable for Simmons admits that they looked like "a moving rag fair," whilst Kincaid records that "there was scarcely a vestige of uniform among the men, some of whom were dressed in Frenchmen's coats, some in white breeches and huge jack-boots, some with cocked-hats and queues, most of their swords were fixed to the rifles and stuck full of hams, tongues and loaves of bread and not a few were carrying bird-cages!"

We now come to the losses incurred in this famous Storm. Considering the preparedness of the French and the difficulties of the assault, the sacrifice of life was extraordinarily small. It must always be remembered that Wellington's attack was made against time—in other words he relied upon the gallantry and endurance of his soldiers to overcome the difficulties created by his dispensing with the advantages to be obtained by regular approach and the blowing in of the counterscarp. The fact is that with the muzzle-loading weapons of those days, owing to the time taken to re-charge them combined with the shortness of their range and the inaccuracy of their fire, it was always possible for determined attackers to close to hand-to-hand fighting provided no insuperable obstacles barred the way.

The 1st Battalion Companies had Captain Thomas Fane Uniacke mortally wounded and two officers, Lieutenant John Cox and William Hamilton severely wounded, 1 Rifleman killed and 1 Sergeant and 15 rank and file wounded. Of the 2nd Battalion Companies Captain

Sámuel Mitchell who led the Stormers and Lieutenants Walter Bedell and Alexander M'Gregor were wounded, the two former severely, 8 rank and file were killed and 22 were wounded. The 3rd Battalion Companies had 2 Sergeants and 7 rank and file wounded, the total for the Regiment being 1 officer and 9 men killed and 5 officers and 47 men wounded.¹

The total losses of the British troops are difficult to determine. The Official Returns at the Record Office give the following casualties :—

	KILLED			WOUNDED			MISSING			Total
	Officers	Men		Officers	Men		Officers	Men		
During Siege...	1	69	...	19	462	...	—	2	...	553
At Storm	8	117	...	51	384	...	—	8	...	568
	9	186		70	846		—	10		1,121 ²

The losses of the French are uncertain. Of the Garrison of some 1,900 of all ranks eight officers were killed and twenty-one wounded and about 500 rank and file were killed and wounded mostly on the day of the assault, sixty officers and 1,300 other ranks were taken prisoners.³ Wellington in his despatches states that he had taken 1,800 prisoners of all ranks but probably these included many wounded.

The spoils which fell into the hands of the victors included not only the armament of the place and much war material but the whole of Marmont's siege-train which had been laboriously collected to enable him to reconquer Portugal.

Captain Uniacke figures in several of the various Regimental

¹ It is not easy to get at the exact numbers but so far as regards the losses of the 95th Rifles the casualties taken from the Official List and quoted by Oman in Appendix xii to vol. v, p. 588 are incorrect. The numbers given by Cope and quoted by me are those from the Casualty returns and have been checked from the Pay-lists and Monthly returns.

² Wellington in his despatch to Lord Liverpool of 22 January 1812 gives 9 officers and 169 other ranks killed and 70 officers and 748 men wounded—a total including 7 missing of 1,003 or about 100 less. Napier in his History gives the total casualties as 1,250 of which 60 officers and 650 men were killed and wounded in the Storm.

³ Oman, vol. v, p. 186.

accounts. The first time his name is mentioned in the Regiment was in the retreat of Coruña when his piquet was surprised by the French and had to give way and run for their lives. A French officer led the advance "short and stout, in a cocked-hat and wearing a huge pair of jack-boots." Upon Uniacke joining our supports the French turned and ran and the chasers now became the chased. Uniacke who was one of the most active men in the Army made sure of capturing the little Frenchman, but to his intense discomfiture the wearer of the "seven-leagued boots" plied them so well that he fairly outran his pursuer and got away!¹ At Rodrigo Fitz Maurice has narrated how just before the assault he saw Uniacke wearing a beautiful new pelisse and chaffed him for using it for such a night's work. To which Uniacke replied "I shall be all the better worth taking."² Simmons mentions having met him on the *fausse-braie* and how Uniacke went on and had hardly "got round the corner" before the mine which blew up him and his men exploded. Poor Uniacke was terribly burned, one arm was torn from its socket, but he survived for over a week dying at Gallegos on 27 January after suffering great agonies. His epitaph has been quaintly written by one of our Buglers who describes him as "An Irish gentleman, the best runner in the Regiment and one of the cleverest men who ever walked in a pair of boots." He said just before he died "*Remember I was the first man who entered the breach.*"³

Costello records how Uniacke was "gallant, daring and just and the idol of his Company." His Pay-Sergeant, Fairfoot,⁴ was anxious that he should be buried in consecrated ground but the Spanish priests

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, 23.

² Biographical sketch of Major-General John Fitz Maurice, K.H. (printed in 1908), p. 27.

³ William Green (late Rifle Brigade), *Travels and Adventures*, p. 25.

⁴ Robert Fairfoot (afterwards Quartermaster) figures repeatedly in several Regimental accounts throughout the Peninsular Campaigns and at Waterloo.

objected to this since he was a heretic. Fairfoot however assured the priests that Uniacke was an Irishman, which to them implied that he must be a Roman Catholic. So it was that this very gallant officer was laid to rest at the foot "of the finest tree in the churchyard of Gallegos" by the men of his Company under command of his subaltern, Thomas Smith.

We left the sorely-stricken Chief of the Light Division on the glacis in front of the Lesser Breach. Thence he was carried to a small house in the suburb of San Francisco and, after the custom of these days, bled twice. Soon after this he went into a heavy death-like slumber from which he did not awake until long after dawn on the 20th. From the first it was recognized that his wounds were extremely grave and he himself was convinced that he could never recover.

Charles Stewart,¹ Wellington's Adjutant-General, who was one of his most intimate friends has recorded that when he first sent for him Crauford felt his wound was mortal but that subsequently he may have cherished hopes of recovery. He was attended by John Robb² formerly of the Rifle Corps and Staff-Surgeon Gunning, Wellington's own surgeon, and his old friend Captain William Campbell and his two Aide-de-Camps never left him for a minute.

Unfortunately he suffered the greatest agonies from his wounds throughout the 21st and 22nd. On the 23rd the pains lessened and he spoke with greater composure and apparent ease and sent a message to his wife. It is pathetic to record that when lying mortally wounded he sent for Wellington, and on his coming to see him, most solemnly asked his forgiveness for any injuries he might have done or tried to do him.³

About 2 a.m. on the 24th he fell asleep for the first time since the night of the 19th and died peacefully in his sleep about 10 o'clock.

¹ Afterwards Lord Londonderry.

² John Robb was the original Surgeon of the Rifle Corps on its first formation in 1800 and served with it continuously until 1809 when he was appointed to the Staff.

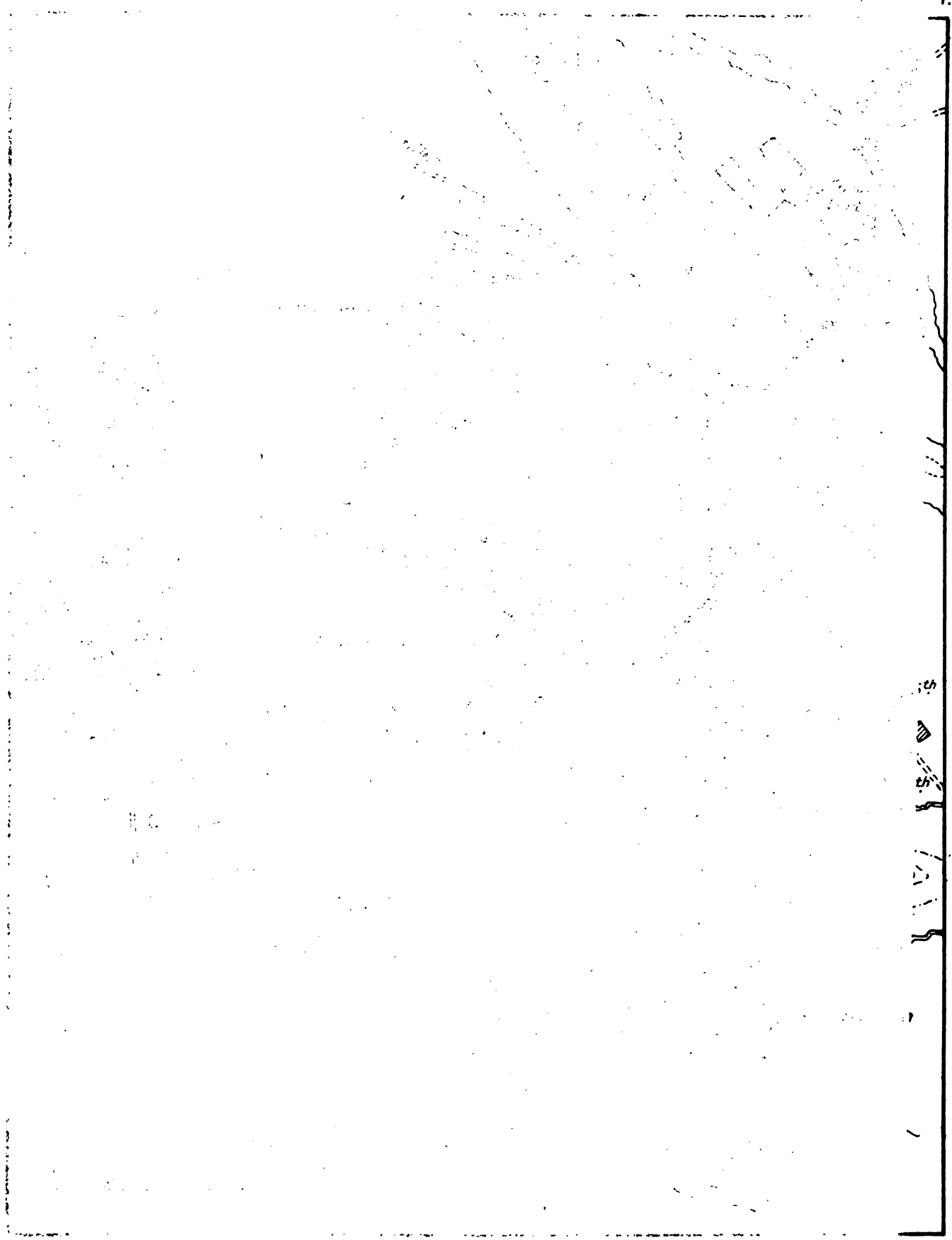
³ Croker, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 346.

By chance a young subaltern joined Wellington's Army on the evening of the same day (who was subsequently widely known as the Chaplain-General to our Army, the Rev. G. R. Gleig¹) who has left us an account of Craufurd's death and funeral which shows most convincingly how changed were the feelings of those under his command, by whom he was at the time of his death both respected and liked. That a few of the officers who had fallen out with him and had reason to remember it had no love for him is undeniable. It is also true that some of the very best officers such as the gallant MacLeod who fell at Badajoz resented his methods and recorded their opinions of them, but the evidence on all sides is to the effect that the bulk of the officers and all the men of the Light Division had by this time learnt that, rough as were his methods and rougher still as was his tongue, his aim and object in life was to look after their comfort and efficiency.

Wellington decided that Craufurd should be laid to rest in the breach whither he had led his men with such intrepidity and had received his mortal wound. So it was that he was carried thither on the morning of the 26th by the six Sergeant-Majors of the Light Division with six of the Field Officers as pall bearers. The Light Division, under arms, marched from their cantonments to the house where lay the body of their dead chief. A proportion formed the firing party, the remainder following as mourners. The route to the Lesser Breach was lined by the 5th Division, and Wellington, Castaños and Beresford with a host of other officers followed the procession.

When Craufurd's body was lowered into the grave Gleig, who was close by, records that not alone the veterans who carried him but many of the rank and file showed unmistakeable signs of deep sorrow. No

¹ The Rev. G. R. Gleig joined the 85th Regiment at Ciudad Rodrigo and served onwards throughout the Peninsular War and subsequently in the American War 1814-15. He took Holy Orders in 1820 and was appointed Chaplain-General to the Forces in 1844, which post he held until 1875. He died at Winchfield in 1888.

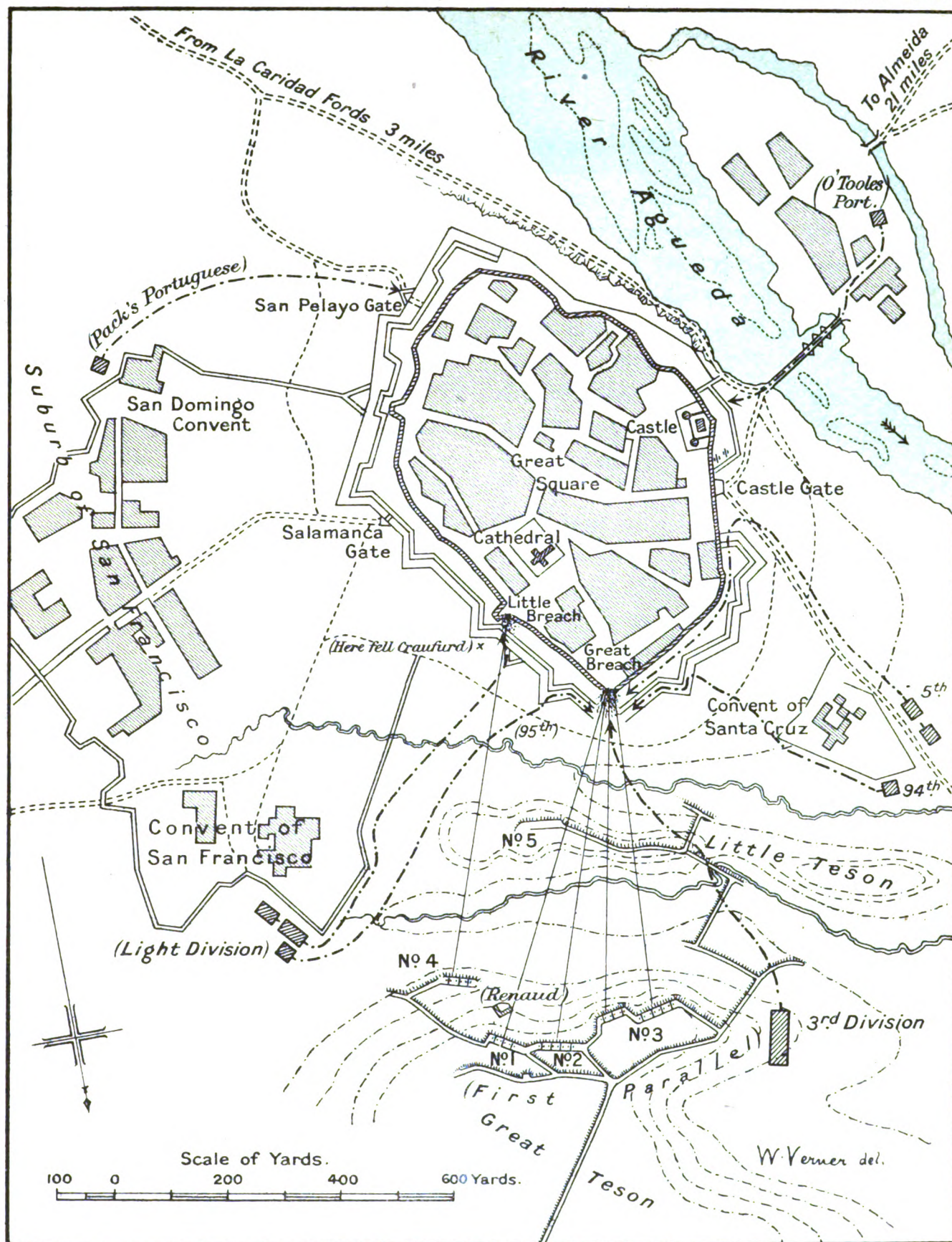


He may be criticized for, as the pollard Nixon might say, "present[ing] his own views and conclusions as if they were the only ones available." But we must not let the bulk of the evidence of his moderation lead us to conclude by this time-honored argument that "the more you know of history, the more you know of the present." The more you know of history, the more you know of the future.

[illegible]

With a painful sigh, he looked into the grave which was
 the last resting place of the young lady who carried him to his
 grave. He turned away, his eyes were full of deep sorrow. No

He was the first to be elected United States Senator from Wisconsin, and served in the American War of Independence. He was also the first to be elected to the House of Representatives, and served in the House for 12 years.



ATTACK OF CIUDAD RODRIGO 8-19 JANUARY, 1812.

(From Jones's Sieges).

ATTACK OF CIUDAD RODRIGO

soldier could wish for a truer tribute to the esteem in which he was held than the genuine and visible sorrow of those war-hardened men. The pity of it was that it came too late. Kincaid puts it truly if somewhat tersely, when he says that "like many a gem of purer ray his value was scarcely known until lost."¹ That he had lived down entirely all resentment is well proven by Kincaid's remarks on his burial.

"His funeral was attended by Lord Wellington and by all of the officers of the Division by whom he was ultimately much liked. He had introduced a system of discipline into the Light Division which made them unrivalled. A very rigid exaction of the duties pointed out in his code of regulations made him very unpopular at its commencement and it was not until a short time before he was lost to us for ever that we were capable of appreciating his merits and fully sensible of the incalculable advantages we derived from the perfection of the system."²

Many years ago there came to the knowledge of the present writer an incident which is conclusive proof, if any such were needed, that the Riflemen and their comrades in arms of the Light Division had thoroughly realized what a good friend Craufurd had been to them and how deeply they felt his loss. The late Sir Martin Dillon,³ to whom the writer is indebted for many stories of the old Peninsular and Waterloo officers who were personally known to him, gave the following story which he had from an eye-witness in the 52nd Light Infantry, the late Field-Marshal Sir Charles Yorke.⁴

All who have followed Craufurd's career are well aware how determined he was to punish with the utmost severity any soldier who

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 43.

² Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 118.

³ General Sir Martin Dillon, G.C.B., C.S.I., joined the Army in 1843 and served in the Regiment, 1858 to 1878, was Colonel-Commandant of the 4th Battalion, 1904, until his death, 18 August 1908.

⁴ F.-M., Sir C. Yorke, G.C.B., born 1790, joined the 52nd in 1808, Colonel-Commandant of the 2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade, 1863 until his death in 1880.

broke the ranks or attempted by "defiling" to pick his way across wet ground. In fact it is on record that once, when he saw an officer being carried across a stream on the back of a soldier, he ordered the latter instantly to drop his burden in the water, and made the luckless officer wade back and recross the river, to the amusement of all ranks. In consequence it had become almost a matter of second nature among the men of the Light Division to be most careful how they avoided crossing wet ground when on the line of march, lest the ever vigilant eye of Craufurd should detect them in the act.

Sir Charles Yorke's story is as follows :—

"As the Light Division returned from the grave of their late Commander there lay in its way deep slush and mud and as this was approached there passed down the ranks a low buzz. The men drew themselves together and plunged into the mire. . . . It was a tribute to their dead chief whose iron discipline they well knew had so often led them to victory as it had saved them from avoidable losses."¹

Wellington's tribute to Craufurd's services and memory was as follows. Writing to Lord Liverpool from Gallegos on 29 January 1812, he says :—"Major-General Craufurd died on the 24th instant of the wounds which he received on the 19th, while leading the Light Division of this Army to the assault of Ciudad Rodrigo.

"Although the conduct of Major-General Craufurd on the occasion on which these wounds were received, and the circumstances which occurred, have excited the admiration of every officer in the Army, I cannot report his death to your Lordship without expressing my sorrow and regret, that His Majesty has been deprived of the services, and I of the assistance, of an Officer of tried talents and experience, who was an ornament to his profession, and was calculated to render the most important services to his country."

¹ So far as I am aware this story first appeared in print in an article I wrote for the *Saturday Review* in January, 1912, on the Centenary of the Storm of Ciudad Rodrigo. It has since been mentioned by Mr. Oman and other writers.

I do not propose to enter into the controversy which has arisen or late years as to Robert Craufurd's merits and demerits. All who have read this History will see how at one time his extreme severity caused him to be heartily disliked by many of those under him. But all evidence goes to prove that before he fell at Ciudad Rodrigo a great change had come about and that the men had learnt the practical lesson that his undoubted severity was prompted by his anxiety for their welfare and comfort upon which depended their military efficiency and security.

In his "History of the British Army" Mr. John Fortescue has been in my opinion a little too severe on Craufurd's memory. For, in spite of Craufurd's obvious failings, it is incontestable that, alike as a trainer and as a leader of men, he was great. Certainly England has had nothing like him before or since. That he made several mistakes is only to say that he made war. The old saying that "the man who never made a mistake never made anything" applies with double force to a soldier. Craufurd had one great attribute as a "leader of men"—an attribute, by the way, which has been painfully absent in some of those who in modern days have been thus styled by their friends and admirers—he knew exactly what he wanted to do and he generally succeeded in doing it. Inaction and indecision were alike unknown to him. What his loss meant to the Light Division can be gathered from this History.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORM OF BADAJOZ, 1812.

Napoleon's fresh orders—Wellington decides to attack Badajoz—Distribution of Marmont's and Soult's Armies at this time—After the storm of Rodrigo—Military executions—March to Badajoz—"Cant names" of Divisions—Badajoz invested—Description of the fortress—Wellington's plan of attack—Commencement of Siege—Fort Picurina stormed—The breaching batteries established—Riflemen's duties during the Siege—The ramparts breached—Marmont's and Soult's movements—Philippon's defensive measures—Wellington's orders for the Storm—Anxiety of our men to storm the place—The first attack of the 3rd Division—The great attack on the breaches—Terrible slaughter—Death in many forms—The Light Division and 4th Division ordered to retire—Wellington orders a renewed attack—Escalade of the Castle by the 3rd Division—The 5th Division escalade the San Vincente Bastion—Capture of the Fortress—Losses of the various Divisions—Losses in the 95th Rifles—Sack of Badajoz—How Peter O'Hare died—"A Lieut.-Colonel or cold meat"—Harry Smith's romantic adventure : and marriage—Wellington's attack criticized by the men who made it—Badajoz revisited—Memories of the Storm—Napier's splendid eulogy of the heroism of our men.

MARMONT received the totally unexpected news of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo on 21 January when on the march to Salamanca about eleven miles north-east of that city, and for the time gave up all idea of any further advance.

See Map
"Spain and
Portugal"
at end of
volume.

The situation of the French Army at this critical time of the war was indeed a peculiar one, complicated as it was by Napoleon's latest orders which only reached Marmont on 29 December 1811. The arrangement of only a few months back whereby Marmont in the centre, with the "Army of Portugal," was supposed to be able to assist Dorsenne's Army in the north or Soult's Army in the south was replaced by an entirely new one in which Marmont with the "Army of Portugal,"

consisting of less than eight Divisions, was to be held responsible for practically the whole region from the Asturias on the north to Estremadura in the south. A second and much smaller force known as the "Army of the North" under Dorsenne was to hold the north-east provinces of Spain namely Santander, Navarre and the east of Old Castile and to keep order in that unruly district. The trouble of it all was that owing to Napoleon's requirements for Russia and consequent withdrawals of troops eastward, Marmont was expected to do about double the work hitherto required of him with an addition of only 3,000 to 4,000 men.

Within less than ten days of the fall of Rodrigo Wellington had come to the conclusion that Marmont could for the present do him no harm and that there was nothing to prevent him from carrying out his scheme to attack and capture Badajoz, the other fortress on the western frontier of Spain which barred his advance. His arrangements for an attack on Badajoz were few and simple. He ordered supplies to be sent up from Lisbon to Elvas and sent word to Hill to be prepared to make another raid into Estremadura to destroy the bridge across the Tagus at Almaraz, by which he hoped to check any attempt of Marmont to march to the relief of Badajoz and possibly to oblige him to go round by Toledo, some eighty miles up-stream. Since the roads from Rodrigo to Badajoz were unsuited for heavy ordnance he ordered his 24-pounder siege-guns with their ammunition to be shipped on the Douro and taken down to Oporto and thence carried by sea to Setubal the nearest port to Elvas. The siege-howitzers drawn by bullocks were to travel by the mountain roads direct to Elvas.

When in February Wellington marched southward, Marmont was at Valladolid, three Divisions under Foy were in the Tagus Valley, Bonnet was at Leon and Montbrun who had been recalled from Alicante was at Salamanca with all the light cavalry as an advance-guard. The remainder of the French forces were on the Douro and near Avila.

Soult had meanwhile likewise reorganized his forces into Divisions and the Ist, IVth and Vth Corps were now divided into six infantry Divisions with three of cavalry, altogether 50,000 strong, dispersed as follows :—

D'Erlon with the 5th Division and a brigade of cavalry was near Medellin on the Guadiana, the 6th Division and a brigade of cavalry being hard by. Leval with the 4th Division and a division of cavalry was about Granada and Malaga. Villatte with the 3rd Division and other troops was still before Cadiz. Conroux with the 1st Division was watching Ballesteros and Copons near Gibraltar and Latour-Maubourg with the 2nd Division was in Andalusia under Villatte's orders.

It is necessary for our story that this general disposition of the French should be made clear, or it is hard to understand how Wellington, having snatched Ciudad Rodrigo from the grasp of Marmont's superior forces, could now set about repeating the same operation at Badajoz where he would have Soult as well as Marmont to reckon with. The fact is that for want of supplies and owing to the impossibility of living on the country neither Marmont nor Soult could concentrate his forces for any time. Added to this were the many calls to hold their own at various critical points and, lastly, the eternal question of the guerrilla risings. Wellington on the other hand owing to his secure sea-communications and his well organized transport service with Lisbon and Oporto could, in spite of the enormous difficulties of the country and lack of good roads, always feed his army in a fashion.

As soon as the French prisoners had been marched away from Ciudad Rodrigo and order restored, Wellington set to work to put the place in a state of defence by repairing the breaches and filling in and destroying his own recently constructed works. On 31 January the Army returned to its old cantonments across the Agueda, the Light Division going to Fuente Guinaldo. On 2 February Wellington

established his Headquarters at Freneda. The frost now broke and the heavy rains and floods which followed swept away the trestle-bridge at Marialva, severing all communication between the Army and the garrison of the fortress for a day or two.

On the 10th a draft of fifty recruits arrived from the Dépôt in England, being the first received by the 1st Battalion since it landed in Portugal in May 1809. What course of "progressive field training" these recruits were subjected to, I am unable to state. A few weeks later they found themselves in sight of the enemy for the first time near Badajoz, when O'Hare took advantage of the occasion to put a finishing touch to their military education. After falling in the parade he gave the command "Recruits to the front" and upon their stepping forward he addressed them as follows: "Do you see those men on that plain? well then, those are the French, and our enemies. You must kill those fellows and not allow them to kill you. You must learn to do as these old birds here do (pointing at the Riflemen in the ranks) and get cover where you can. Recollect, recruits, you came here to kill and not to be killed. Bear this in mind, if you don't kill the French, they'll kill you."¹

On the 21st the Light Division was assembled at Ituero in order to witness the military execution of seven men who had been found in Rodrigo after the Storm among a number of other deserters from the British Army. These included men of the various nationalities at the time in our Service.² They had been tried by a Court Martial of which Major-General James Kempt was president and were shot in the presence of the whole Division. Two of them were Riflemen. One

¹ Costello, *Memoirs*, p. 71.

² During the whole Peninsular War seventy-eight soldiers in our service were shot for desertion. Of these fifty-two were British and twenty-six foreign-born but it must be remembered that the proportion of British to foreigners in our Army was probably about five to one. See *Wellington's Army* (Oman), p. 243 and *note*.

of them was in the Highland Company which was then kept up in the 3rd Battalion, of the name of M'Guinniss, a shoemaker by trade and previously a man of good character.¹

Sir William Cope relates how a fortnight later when the Regiment was at Castello da Vide another man of the 1st Battalion was shot for desertion. His name was Arnal and he was, or had been, a Corporal. When Ciudad Rodrigo was taken he in some way escaped and endeavoured to join the French troops in Salamanca but in crossing the country he fell in with some Spanish soldiers who made him prisoner and marched him back to the Regiment. He had been a man of good character and it was hoped that this might have weighed in his favour but discipline had to be vindicated and so great a crime as desertion to the enemy could not be condoned. This man met his death with amazing firmness; settling his accounts with the Pay-sergeant of his Company and distributing his balance among his comrades the night before his death. When brought out to execution he refused to have his eyes bound, saying to the Provost-Sergeant "There is no occasion: I shall not flinch." Nor did he.²

Ituero provided very pleasant quarters. In the neighbourhood was excellent coursing country, abounding in hares which gave much sport as well as providing food for our hungry officers. Wellington had his pack of fox-hounds with him at his head-quarters at Freneda and it is characteristic of him that in order not to raise Marmont's suspicions he remained on at Freneda until 6 March, by which date all his troops were well on the march southward and let it be known that he contemplated hunting in the Yeltes country.

Some of our Army began to march southward on 16 February and ten days later on the 26th the Light Division left Fuente Guinaldo and

¹ Surtees in his autobiography gives a most graphic account of these executions (pp. 133-136). Kincaid *Adventures*, p. 119 also describes them.

² Cope, p. 101.

marched to Alfayates in Portugal. They reached Castello Branco on 3 March and on the 6th crossed the Tagus by the bridge of boats at Niza arriving at Elvas on the 16th. The whole of Wellington's force was by this time near Badajoz with the exception of the 1st King's German Hussars who were near Rodrigo on the Yeltes watching the road from Salamanca.

Captain Tomkinson in his excellent diary takes this opportunity to give a list of the various Divisions and Brigades with their actual Commanders,¹ at the end of which he adds the slang names by which the various Divisions were popularly known in our Army at the time. Since the roll is entered in the diary it is plain that the names were then in vogue. Further they must have been of recent origin since they include the newly formed 7th Division.

CANT NAMES IN THE ARMY FOR THE DIVISIONS (1 MARCH 1812.)

Light Division	...	...	...	<i>The Division</i>
1st	"	...	...	<i>The Gentlemen's Sons</i>
2nd	"	...	...	<i>The Observing Division</i>
3rd	"	...	...	<i>The Fighting Division</i>
4th	"	...	...	<i>The Supporting Division</i>
5th	"	...	...	<i>The Pioneers</i>
6th	"	...	...	<i>The Marching Division</i>
7th	"	...	...	<i>They tell us there is a 7th but we have never seen it</i>

There is a note to the 4th Division "After the affair in the Pyrenees they were called 'The Enthusiastics.'" It does not require any very deep knowledge of the events of the war to fathom the reasons which led to the selection of several of these pseudonyms, others are less apparent.

Wellington left Freneda on 6 March for Badajoz and on the night before his arrival at Elvas received the news that he had been created Earl Wellington for his capture of Ciudad Rodrigo. At

¹ *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, p. 132. By a curious printer's error the Light Division appears in this list as if it were a portion of the Seventh Division. I mention this fact since it has perplexed some readers.

Elvas he found all his orders had been carried out. The heavy 24-pounders which had come by sea from Oporto to Setubal had been brought up and the 24-pounder howitzers and gun-carriages he had sent across the mountain roads from Rodrigo were also there. These, with eighteen Russian 18-pounders from the Navy at Lisbon, brought up his siege-train to fifty-two pieces.

On the 15th he began operations by throwing a pontoon bridge across the Guadiana at a narrow point about ten miles below Badajoz with a flying bridge a mile and a half above it. A Portuguese brigade was passed across the same evening to protect them. In order to keep watch on Soult and d'Erlon, Graham was detached across the river on the following day with the 1st, 6th and 7th Divisions and two cavalry divisions with orders to move on Valverde on the Seville road. Hill, whose projected raid on Almaraz had been postponed, marched with the 2nd Division and some Portuguese infantry and cavalry by the northern bank on Merida in order to watch the line of the Guadiana at that point and also Medellin in case Marmont should advance by Almaraz and Trujillo.

On 16 March the 3rd, 4th and Light Divisions under Beresford crossed by the bridge and took up their appointed posts to invest Badajoz. Wellington's Reserve, consisting of the 5th Division which had left Ciudad Rodrigo on the 9th, and two Portuguese brigades, as well as some cavalry, about 12,000 men, were all assembled by the 20th. When the 5th Division withdrew from Rodrigo the fortress was left in charge of a Spanish garrison of 3,000 men and Wellington relied on the combined Spanish and Portuguese forces to delay any advance of Marmont's army from that side.

See
Map **XXIV**,
p. 384.

It is now necessary to describe the fortress which was about to be the scene of one of the most desperate assaults in which the British Army has ever been engaged. Badajoz lies on the left (or southern bank) of the river Guadiana and is a town of considerable size with

narrow streets and many *patios* or courtyards leading from one house to another. The river, which varies from about 300 to 500 yards in width, runs below the northern walls whilst on the other sides there are eight spacious and well-built bastion-fronts with good scarps, counterscarps, covered-way and glacis, also some ravelins, most of which at the time of the siege were unfinished. The walls of the bastions are over thirty feet high and those of the curtains twenty-three to thirty feet. There are two detached works, one a crown-work known as the Pardaleras 200 yards outside the south-western front and the second, the Picurina, a strong redoubt 400 yards from the town walls on the south-eastern front. At the north-east corner of the fortress, where a brook known as the Rivillas joins the river, there is a hill over 100 feet in height on which is the old Castle. The walls are lofty but weak and unprotected, standing at the top of a steep slope and only partly flanked by some ancient towers, and form part of the regular enceinte of the fortress at this point. Across the river on the right or northern bank are the heights of San Cristobal almost on the same level as the Castle and about 500 yards from it. On these heights is the Fort of San Cristobal, the only communication between Badajoz and this important detached work being the bridge which is 600 yards long and exposed to fire from all sides. A small tête-de-pont protected the northern exit from the bridge.

When Wellington reconnoitred the place prior to his attack in April 1811 he decided to reduce the Fort of San Cristobal first since he was working against time and he hoped that if he could gain possession of the heights he could bombard the Castle and subsequently attack it in due form from the southern bank. As we know, the assaults on San Cristobal were driven back and the siege had to be raised on the approach of Soult and Marmont on 16 June 1811.

Wellington in March 1812 found that the defences had been much strengthened since his attack of the preceding year, especially

on the San Cristobal Heights where new batteries had been constructed. On the southern side the outwork of Pardeleras had been improved and connected with the enceinte, and guns mounted to command its interior. Ravelins had also been thrown up on some of the fronts which naturally strengthened the body of the place and three of the fronts had been counter-mined, a fact of which he fortunately became aware. The old Castle had been provided with a strong interior retrenchment and many guns mounted, rendering it a formidable point to attack. The Rivillas stream had been dammed at the bridge in rear of the San Roque lunette, not far from where it joins the Guadiana, and a big inundation thus formed, making an attack from that side most difficult ; the waters thus held back had entered the main ditch, generally a dry one and flooded it between the San Pedro and Trinidad bastions. In this ditch a deep narrow cutting, known as a *cunette*, had been dug making the otherwise shallow waters impassable.

The deviser of all these improvements was General Philippon, who was no doubt admirably fitted for the task and who had a garrison of about 5,000 men of whom 4,500 were present and fit for duty. The works were armed with 140 cannon but the supply of ammunition, both shot and shell, was not adequate, thanks to General Hill who had twice prevented convoys of ammunition from being brought in from Seville. So far as regards food there was some six weeks' supplies, due to Philippon's energetic action.

Wellington, in view of his experiences of the preceding year and his further knowledge of the new defences, decided to attack the fortress from the southern side. Here it was discovered that from a point on the heights of San Miguel, on which stood Fort Picurina, the scarp of the southern face of the Trinidad bastion was visible, owing to the counter-guard in front of it being unfinished. Hence if the Picurina fort were taken, batteries could breach the scarp of the Trinidad from the San Miguel hill. He at once ordered the field-park to be collected behind

that hill on the Merida road about 1,800 yards from the fortress and the work was energetically pushed forward.

The night of the 17th March was wet and stormy and after dark detachments of the Light Division, also of the 3rd and 4th Divisions, were sent to break ground before the Picurina. A covering party of 2,000 men were held ready and a working party of 1,800 men were concealed in the hollow ground less than 300 yards from the salient of the work and by daylight 600 yards of the parallel, 3 feet deep and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, was opened out, some parts of it within 160 yards of the covered-way; also over 1,000 yards of communication trenches. At daylight the French opened a heavy musketry fire from parapet and covered-way, they also fired a howitzer and some field guns placed in the work. On the next and following night two batteries were completed for four 24-pounders and three 18-pounders and three $5\frac{1}{2}$ inch howitzers.

On the morning of the 19th the guns from the town ramparts opened on the working parties but with small result. At 1 o'clock, whilst the British working parties were being relieved, Philippon made a vigorous sortie with 1,500 infantry and forty cavalry which, issuing from the Talavera Gate and forming up in the communication from the San Roque lunette to the Picurina, suddenly dashed out and entered the 1st parallel before our men could stand to their arms. The cavalry at the same moment galloped round the right flank of the parallel and gained the field-park 1,000 yards in rear of our trenches. Here they caused great confusion among the unarmed men. Our men rallied about fifty yards in rear of the trench and charging drove out the daring attackers and pursued them far beyond it. During the brief time they were in the parallel they had filled in a portion of it and captured 200 intrenching tools. Our losses were nearly 150 officers and men killed and wounded. After this daring raid Wellington ordered some squadrons of the 14th Light Dragoons and a brigade of field guns to be kept constantly in readiness in rear of the heights of San Miguel.

The work proceeded steadily but on the morning of the 21st the French opened with two field-pieces from the hills near San Cristobal and enfiladed the right battery. A few of the 95th were at once sent down to the banks of the river and fired with effect, killing or wounding many of those working the guns and causing the French to withdraw them.

On the 22nd the enemy renewed their fire from some guns under cover near the same point, which threw shot into the parallel at a range of 1600 yards with destructive effect. In consequence Wellington was obliged to order General Leith with the 5th Division to march from Campo Mayor and invest San Cristobal on that side. The wet weather had already caused great delay and on this day a tremendous downfall of rain flooded all the trenches and the river rose and washed away the pontoon bridge.

On the night of 24 March the batteries were completed and armed with twenty-eight guns and sufficient ammunition brought up. At 11 a.m. next morning fire was opened on the Picurina and also on the supporting bastions and kept up briskly all day, the foe replying with great energy. The fort was of redan form with a gorge closed by triple palisades. The parapet was thirty feet above the bottom of the ditch but the scarp was only fifteen feet high, at the top of which was a line of fraises and then a steep earthen slope. The counterscarp was nine feet high. There were splinter-proof retrenchments inside the work, which was held by 230 men and was armed with seven guns. The results of the day's firing were to dismount the guns and knock about the salient of the work and smash up some of the fraises and Wellington decided to attack it the same night with a force under General Kempt who was commanding in the trenches. The attack was ordered to be made by two columns, each of 200 men of the 77th and 88th Regiments with a third column of 100 of the 83rd in reserve, all from the 3rd Division. One hundred men, taken from the

working parties of the Regiments of the Light Division carrying axes, crowbars and ladders, preceded the columns.¹

The attack was launched at 9 o'clock and both columns detached half their numbers to sweep round to the rear of the work to endeavour to break in, but many were shot down, the gorge being well flanked. Now it was that the 83rd men made a determined rush at the salient and with the aid of the ladders, after entering the ditch, ascended to the fraises and collecting on the berm stormed the parapet and fought their way in with bayonet and musket. According to Simmons who was present Lieutenant Stokes of the Rifles who commanded the ladder party was "after placing the ladders the first man in the place."

Napier describes how meanwhile "the axe men of the Light Division compassing the fort like prowling wolves, found the gate and broke it in." That they did so is unquestionable but not before the men of the 74th and 88th had made a most gallant and desperate attack on it and lost heavily and there can be little doubt that the success of the axe men in the end was due to the garrison being diverted from the gorge owing to the attack of the 83rd at the salient and the almost simultaneous attack of the 88th on the right flank.

Of the French the Commandant with two officers and eighty men were taken prisoners and only one officer and thirty-one men escaped, the remainder being killed or drowned in the inundation in rear. The British losses were severe, four officers and fifty men killed and fifteen officers and 250 men wounded ; a total of 319 casualties in under six

¹ Jones in his *Sieges* pp. 187-189 says that these parties were found by the Sappers and Miners, 24 to each column, he also mentions that the Reserve column was provided with ladders. Most probably there were Sappers and Miners but it is perfectly plain that the Light Division found the ladder parties, as Simmons in his *Diary* mentions by name the officer of the Rifles who led the ladder party and Moorsom in his *History of the 52nd* describes how the 52nd were under their own officers, two of which were wounded (Moorsom, p. 162). Since it is clear that both the 52nd and 95th were with the ladder parties, most probably the 43rd were there also.

hundred men. In spite of the heavy British losses and the fact that the French opposed the attack for over half an hour Philippon in a General Order severely censured the garrison for the loss of the place. There can be small doubt that had the French fired the mines and exploded the shells provided for that purpose the British attack would have failed.

The following morning the French guns destroyed the lodgement made in the Picurina but when night fell the work was renewed and the British pushed on. During this and the following nights the 2nd parallel was thrown up, two of the old batteries were filled in, and three new ones were constructed nearer to the fortress. One of these, known as No. 7 on the left of the captured Picurina redoubt, was armed with twelve 24-pounders to breach the south face of La Trinidad bastion at a range of 580 yards. Two others, nos. 8 and 9, were constructed in the gorge of the Picurina to batter the left flank of the Santa Maria bastion (which supported La Trinidad) at a range of 500 yards. These were armed with three 24-pounders and eleven 18-pounders. A fourth battery (no. 10) of four howitzers was made in the 1st parallel to enfilade the main-ditch of the fortress in front of La Trinidad and thus prevent working-parties of the enemy completing the counterguard there. When on the 30th the breaching battery (no. 9) opened on La Trinidad the fire of the French sharp-shooters, at a range of about 300 yards from the covered-way, was so severe and accurate, that it was necessary to send for a party of the 95th Rifles to occupy the trench in front whence at ranges of between 250 and 350 yards they easily kept down the fire of the defenders.

Siege-operations entail much hardship, danger and heavy toil especially on the infantry soldier and it is refreshing to read how during these anxious days before Badajoz our officers and men were always able to appreciate the humours of the situation. The Portuguese militia, who were not very highly effective troops, were employed in bringing up

supplies of ammunition from Elvas, each man carrying a 24-pounder shot and we are told how they made the return journey of 24 miles "cursing all the way and back again" at their task. A large proportion of our artillerymen were Portuguese who did excellent service under their British officers. Kincaid has given an amusing description of a Portuguese "look-out man" at work in one of our big batteries. This man knew exactly the position of all the enemy's guns which could bear on the battery and when they fired gave due notice of what was coming, whether a shot or a shell, by calling "*balla*" or "*bomba*" as the case might be. Sometimes the French fired a salvo from all arms, upon which "he would throw himself down screaming out '*Jesus ! todas, todas,*' meaning everything."¹

One of the most important duties of our Riflemen at this time was to keep down the fire of the enemy working the guns. Thus on 3 April three or four heavy cannon did much execution amongst the artillerymen in one of our advanced batteries and on the following morning, whilst it was still dark, an officer was ordered to take forward ten picked shots who were to dig rifle pits for themselves opposite to the guns in question. When daylight came the Riflemen opened a close fire on the embrasures and had the satisfaction, after half an hour's practice, to find the enemy's fire slackening and soon afterwards gabions and sandbags were stuffed into the embrasures. Later on, when the Frenchmen attempted to withdraw the gabions so as to re-open fire, the Riflemen again fired into the embrasures and the gabions were quickly replaced. Simmons describes that he was so delighted with the good practice his men were making against "*Johnny*" that he "kept it up from daylight to dark with forty as prime fellows as ever pulled trigger. These guns were silenced."²

During the day a French officer, evidently a good shot, placed

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 127.

² Simmons, p. 227.

his huge cocked hat in the long grass near the covered way and, leaving it there, opened fire from a point a little distance from it. As he fired, his men handed him loaded muskets. Simmons having detected his whereabouts called up one of his Riflemen and told him to rest his rifle on his left shoulder so as to get a more elevated rest. The man did so and fired and no more was seen of the French officer. But Simmons, forgetting the liberal allowance of powder in the pan of the Baker rifle, was badly burnt and had a "pretty example" made of his left ear and side of his head. That the Frenchman was killed or wounded we gather from the fact that his cocked hat remained where he had put it for the rest of the day.

Slowly but surely the walls of La Trinidad and the Santa Maria bastions crumbled away under the incessant pounding from our guns, of which no less than thirty-eight were brought into action and breaches became apparent and grew in size until on the morning of 5 April the Engineers reported that they would be practicable by nightfall.

Whilst Wellington was thus deeply committed to the siege he got news that Marmont had marched from Salamanca on 29 March to the Agueda. The position was serious, for the Spanish Commander of Ciudad Rodrigo from pure laziness had not carried out Wellington's orders to re-victual that place with the supplies left for him. Still more serious was the news that Soult had returned from Cadiz and was expected to march from Seville on 30 March to relieve Badajoz. Wellington thereupon ordered Graham to fall back on Villa Franca and Zafra and Hill to do the same on Merida. He also sent the 5th Division from Badajoz to support Hill. On 5 April he heard of Soult's arrival at Llerena only sixty miles distant on the previous day and after examining the breaches at noon decided to assault the fortress the same evening. The Engineers however asked him to wait until a third breach could be made in the curtain between the two battered bastions and he in

consequence postponed the attack until the 6th. That night the 5th Division was recalled and ordered to take post about a mile south-west of Badajoz and Hill, after breaking down the bridge at Merida, returned to Talavera el Real, twelve miles from the fortress. In the event of Soult advancing it was arranged that two Divisions should hold the trenches and that the rest of the army should march out to Albuera to oppose him. It was obvious that time was everything and so it was that Wellington once again was compelled to rely upon the known heroism of his soldiers to accomplish without further delay what would have been otherwise an ordinary attack on a fortress, a far less costly proceeding.

We must now see what Philippon and his garrison had been preparing during the three preceding weeks for the reception of the British soldiers. Counterguards had been thrown up in the main ditch to strengthen the threatened fronts, and the ditch itself had been deepened close to the foot of the counterscarp thereby increasing the drop into it from about eleven to sixteen feet. Retrenchments with musketry parapets had been made inside the body of the place whereby the shattered Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions had been cut off from the interior of the town. Guns had also been mounted on high ground in the Castle so as to sweep the great breach. In addition to the increased obstacle caused by the newly-deepened ditch which had been flooded the dry portions of it below the walls which were not under fire from the ramparts had been blocked with carts, barrows, boats floated up from the Rivillas and a mass of "obstacles," such as broken gabions and fascines, all in one way more efficacious than modern barbed wire since they were inflammable. The foot of the breach had been prepared with land-mines and fougasses, with rows of live shells which could be fired by powder-trains, whilst the slope itself was covered with iron crows'-feet, inverted harrows and loose planks roped together and studded with iron nails. The gaps at the summit of the breaches had

been rebuilt with sandbags and these had been protected in front by huge beams a foot square chained down at either end and studded with scores of cavalry sabres. Powder barrels and live shells had been placed to roll down on the attackers as they scrambled up the slope. Many of these arrangements had been made and kept in readiness in spots sheltered from fire and were only put into position after nightfall when an assault was considered probable and removed by day. The garrison now numbered about 4000 effective men of whom seven hundred picked soldiers were told off to hold the three breaches, every man of these was provided with three loaded muskets resting against the parapet. A battalion of 500 men was posted in rear in support.

Wellington's scheme was to make the main attacks on La Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions with the 4th and Light Divisions. To reach these points they would have to skirt the edge of the inundation and make direct for the centre of the curtain between them. On entering the ditch the 4th were to wheel to the right and attack La Trinidad whilst the Light Division wheeled to the left and stormed the Santa Maria. No mention was made by Wellington of who was to attack the newly-made breach in the curtain between since it had not been made when he inspected the breaches and wrote his orders on the 5th. As at Ciudad Rodrigo each Division was to provide an advanced ladder party, followed by a "forlorn hope" carrying hay-bags, the remainder being divided into a covering-party to line out along the glacis and keep down the enemy's fire whilst the stormers dashed forward and attacked the place. Each Division was to leave 1000 men in reserve in the quarries hard by. In compliance with Picton's earnest request the 3rd Division was to sally from the right of the 1st parallel at 10 p.m. and crossing the Rivillas stream near the Guadiana was to attempt to carry the Castle by escalading, a desperate venture in view of the material difficulties of the task. Several minor attacks were to be made, one by the 5th Division on the Pardeleras redoubt supplemented

by a real attack on the San Vincente bastion near the river bank. Lastly the 48th were to storm the San Roque lunette and destroy the dam so as to drain the inundation, whilst some Portuguese under Colonel Power were to make an attack on the bridge-head across the Guadiana.

Before I attempt to describe the events of the night of the Storm it is well to realize the spirit which animated the attackers without which the desperate courage shown would be almost impossible to believe. All that is said here is taken from the descriptions of eye-witnesses and can be verified. To begin with our soldiers had a deep grudge against the inhabitants of Badajoz for their unfriendly conduct in 1809 and regarded them with some truth as partizans and aiders of their foe the French. Our men had lively recollections of their sufferings and losses in the ineffectual siege of the previous year and the recent storm of Ciudad Rodrigo had raised their fighting blood to high pitch whilst the dangers and discomforts of both sieges had made not a few of them in Napier's words "incredibly savage." This and the high martial spirit which undoubtedly existed throughout the whole army made all ranks desperately anxious to take part in the assault. Kincaid tells us how "as the great crisis approached the anxiety of the soldiers increased, not on account of any doubt or dread of the result, but for fear that the place should be surrendered without standing an assault, for singular as it may appear, although there was a certainty in one man out of every three being knocked down, there were perhaps not three men in the three Divisions who would not rather have braved all the chances than receive it (the fortress) tamely from the hands of the enemy. So great was the rage for passports into eternity in our Battalion on that occasion that even the officers' servants insisted on taking their place in the ranks, and I was obliged to leave my baggage in charge of a man who had been wounded some days before.¹ The buglers of whom only two were

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 129.

allowed to volunteer cast lots as to who should go and apparently those who drew blanks tried to bribe the Bugle-major !¹

The evening of the 6th was a dark one and there was a dense mist hanging over the inundation and ditch all firing had in consequence ceased and no sound was heard except the French sentries well-known call ; *Sentinelles ! Garde-à-vous !*²

The Divisions marched in silence to their places of assembly and piled arms. The order of dress was "without stocks or packs and with trousers rolled up to the knee." Each Division was ordered to leave 1000 men in the quarries as a Reserve. The two Brigades of the Light Division were formed in "close column of companies, left in front," at about 300 yards from the ditch under the command of Andrew Barnard. The covering-party (styled by Wellington the "firing party") consisted of four Companies of the 1st Battalion (the left wing) under Major Cameron and was formed up in front of the Brigade with orders on reaching the edge of the covered-way to extend to the *left* and to keep down the fire from the ramparts.

Next to this party came six volunteers from the 1st Battalion, whose names unhappily I have been unable to trace, under Lieutenant William Johnston carrying ropes with which they hoped to be able to pull aside the chevaux de frise of sword-blades, for it was known that the garrison had thus garnished the top of the breaches. Then followed the "forlorn hope," the strength and composition of which, I regret I have been unable to ascertain.³ The "storming party" consisted

¹ Bugler Green, *Travels and Adventures*, p. 27.

² Moorsom in his *Historical Records of the 52nd* (p. 164) has pointed out how Napier's tale that the French sentries called out "All's well in Badajoz," was no doubt the British soldiers' translation of the above cry, Badajoz being rendered *Badahoo* !

³ Sir W. Cope, p. 104 gives the following list of N.C.O.s of the 2nd Battalion who volunteered for the "Forlorn Hope" :—

Sergeant Cairns	Corporal Coward (wounded)
" Fairfoot (wounded)	" Derby (killed)
" Taggart (wounded)	" Cordell (wounded)
" Kennedy (wounded)	Nesbitt.

of 100 men from each Regiment of the Light Division under the command of the gallant Major O'Hare.

The following were the Officers of the Rifles :—Captain Crampton 1st Battalion, Captain Hart 2nd Battalion, Captain Diggle 3rd Battalion, with Lieutenants Bedell, Manners, Coane and M'Gregor, all of the 2nd Battalion. Following close on the storming party were the rest of the Division, not detailed for the reserve. All was now in readiness for the signal to attack.

Although 10 o'clock had been named as the hour, some twenty minutes before that time a sharp musketry fire was heard at the San Roque lunette, this was caused by a small covering-party of the 48th Regiment in the advanced saps who thus engaged the attention of the defenders whilst their storming party worked round the rear and rushed the work. About the same time Picton's main force emerged from the northern end of the 1st parallel. The covering-party consisted of three companies of the 5th Battalion of the 60th and the light companies of the Division, their advance being unseen by the defenders until they were close up to the covered way. Here a French sentry fired a shot and the leading men of the 60th, thinking that they had been discovered, began firing and the alarm was promptly given.¹

Instantly a storm of grape-shot and musketry struck the head of the column filing across the narrow causeway at the mill dam inflicting heavy losses and great confusion followed. This attack inclined to its left and reached the south of the San Antonio bastion where it was exposed to a flank-fire from both sides. The thirty-foot ladders were planted against the walls but four out of the five were soon broken and overthrown and the men on them hurled back amid their comrades below. In spite of the greatest gallantry and terrible losses the 3rd Division was compelled to fall back for a time and seek the shelter of a big mound close under the walls of the Castle.

¹ Fortescue, viii, p. 397.

During this time the main attack on the breaches was launched. Cameron who with his acting adjutant, Kincaid, had reconnoitred the ground thoroughly by daylight brought the head of the column to the very spot agreed upon on the edge of the glacis and extended his men noiselessly along the covered-way without being perceived by the garrison. It is said that the dark dress of the Riflemen made this task possible. Each man as he reached his place, silently lay down, pushing the muzzle of his rifle through the palisades along the outer edge of the covered-way. The heads of the Frenchmen lining the rampart above them distant only about sixty yards could be distinguished, for the mist had cleared and the moon now shone brightly. A French sentry challenged twice and receiving no reply to his *qui vive* fired and the drums could be heard beating to arms.

According to Harry Smith, who was acting brigade-major to Barnard, by the time the head of the storming column reached the glacis "it was a beautiful moonlight night" and Cameron came back to Barnard and said "Now my men are ready, shall I begin?" To this Barnard replied "Certainly not"—Smith says that "the enemy could be seen manning the walls and breach looking quietly at us but not fifty yards off, and most prepared although not firing a shot. So soon as our ladders were all ready and posted and the column in the very act to move and rush down the ladders, Barnard called out 'Now Cameron' and the first shot brought down on us such a hail of fire as I shall never forget, nor ever saw since. It was most murderous."¹

Cameron when he opened fire had the heads of the defenders silhouetted above the parapet to aim at and it seems to be tolerably certain that the French were aware of the formidable massing of our columns on the glacis in front of them and reserved their fire until the last moment when our men were descending the ladders and crowded in

¹ Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith, vol. i, p. 64.

the covered-way. Soon the ditch was full of our men and it was at this moment that the French set light to the first train of live shells, fougasses and mines buried in the ditch which blew up with a terrific explosion and swept away scores of the storming party. By a cruel mischance, it is said, owing to the Engineer officer who was guiding the advance being shot, the Light Division on entering the ditch instead of inclining to its left and passing to the left of the unfinished ravelin and making for the breach in the Santa Maria bastion, inclined to its *right*. The results were disastrous for the leading stormers struck the ravelin and imagining in the darkness and wild confusion that they were up against the main wall of the place reared their ladders and ascended, only to find themselves on the top of a small plateau swept by a furious fire of musketry from three sides as well as with grape-shot from the Santa Maria bastion. To advance from this point was impossible, for although only sixty yards from the walls they had yet to make a steep drop from a wall¹ into the main part of the ditch. The 52nd in their records say that they also posted their ladders against the ravelin and were similarly led into this fatal trap. But the troubles of the attackers were greatly increased by yet another piece of sheer bad fortune. For not only did the Light Division thus escalate the ravelin but the 4th Division, finding upon entering the ditch that the inundation and counterguard narrowed their possible line of advance, inclined to their *left* and coming up against the ravelin *also* placed their ladders and ascended it! Thus both Divisions had swerved from their true line of advance and by an evil chance both had struck an outwork of the fortress at the same point and became intermingled. It is recorded that the conduct of the officers in this trying moment was most splendid; that wild confusion reigned is unquestionable. The Engineer officers told off to guide the various columns were shot down and hence no real attack was made on the centre breach in the

¹ This was the remains of the old counterscarp before the ditch was widened, which the Spaniards had never removed.

curtain, the Santa Maria and La Trinidad becoming the two objectives of the assailants.

To attempt to describe the events of the following hours is to attempt the impossible. All who witnessed the scenes and who survived them are well agreed as to the incredible gallantry shown by the British officers under the most appalling and hopeless conditions. Several were killed on the glacis and many who stood on the top of the counterscarp lowering the ladders were likewise struck down and the survivors, finding it impossible to restore order, all pushed on and set the example of ascending the breaches. It must not be imagined from this special mention of the officers that there was any holding back among the non-commissioned ranks and the men. One and all did everything that was possible or rather strove to do what is now known to have been impossible in the circumstances. Nor was there any means of abating the fiery ordeal, for even the men told off to fire from the glacis, finding themselves intermixed with and masked by the mass of attackers, dashed forward with them to try to ascend the ramparts. The attack from the outset thus lost all order or cohesion and resolved itself into a series of desperate attempts led by any officer or officers who could collect a few men and attempt to reach the top of one or the other of the breaches. It is said that over thirty and possibly forty such sporadic efforts were made and were successively swept away. Over and over again our men who struggled up the steep rubble slope were met, in addition to the blast of frontal and flanking fire, by bursting shells and grenades hurled down on them besides barrels of powder and cartwheels which came bounding down among them overturning and maiming many. "The whole surface seemed to be vomiting fire and produced flashes of light alternating with momentary utter darkness"¹; whilst from time to time lights were thrown from the town which burnt most brilliantly and enabled the French artillerymen to correct their aim.

¹ Jones *Sieges*, p. 136.

Between cannon-shot, musketry, shells, grenades and explosions, death by fire in almost every conceivable shape was faced by our men whilst the few who gained the summit of the breaches were met in addition with bayonet, sword and axe. Nor were the dangers by water less present. The deepening of the ditch close to the foot of the counterscarp whereby the drop had been increased from some eleven feet to over sixteen had caused many to be maimed who in their reckless advance jumped down. The deepest portions of the ditch where the waters from the inundation had entered drowned not a few as did the *cunette*. Moreover parts of the ditch were full of foul mud and into this our wounded fell and were smothered under conditions horrible to contemplate.¹

Lieutenant Johnston and the whole of his small party were shot down before they could get near the chevaux de frise chained at the top of the breaches, for the defenders, standing behind the shelter of the sword-blades and protected by a sand-bag parapet, deliberately shot down all those who attempted to force a way through. Napier has described how the Frenchmen jeered at our men as they fell and shouted out “Why don’t you come into Badajoz?”

It was only after an hour of these hopeless efforts repeated again and again that the scattered remnants of the two Divisions were ordered to withdraw and some commenced to re-ascend the ladders. At this moment the Portuguese reserve of the 4th Division arrived and those of our men that were already retiring turned and the whole made yet another furious rush at the breaches and the slaughter recommenced afresh. Eventually the order to sound “the retire” was given and our men trooped back sullenly—all that was left of them—for 300 yards across the glacis to the quarries, where they assembled and lay down. It is

¹ In a recent visit to Badajoz (1913) I found the town sewage running into the dry ditch, filling the *cunette* and overflowing into noisome pools, making an inspection of the place a most unpleasant task,

said that the cathedral clock now struck twelve, although some fix the hour of the retirement at nearer one o'clock. Simmons describes how, later on, he was lying on the grass with his comrades "having the most gloomy thoughts of the termination of this sad affair when a Staff officer rode up and said 'Lord Wellington orders the Light Division to return immediately and attack the breaches.' We moved back to our bloody work as if nothing had happened, we entered the ditches and passed over the bodies of our brave men who had fallen and dashed forward to the breaches. Only a few random shots were now fired and we entered without opposition."¹

When Wellington's orders to advance again reached Barnard's Brigade, Harry Smith exclaimed "The Devil! why we have had enough already, we are all knocked to pieces." But although all knew this, one and all went forward without hesitation, such was their determination and belief in their great leader. How and why they were spared a repetition of the fiery ordeal must now be described.

We left Picton after his first set-back re-forming his broken regiments below the lofty walls of the Castle. When his second Brigade came up, the attack was renewed and Lieutenant-Colonel Ridge of the 5th, placing his ladders at a point where the walls were somewhat lower, gained a footing on them and entering the Castle drove out the defenders. It was a most glorious performance but unfortunately the gallant Ridge was shot dead near the Castle gates. These the French had barricaded and Picton, who had been wounded, sent word to Wellington to apprise him of his success, and decided to wait till daylight before he attempted to break out of the Castle and enter the town. It was now about eleven o'clock and the fighting at the breaches was still raging.

Leith's attack with the 5th Division on the far-distant San

¹ Simmons, p. 230.

Vincente bastion had been delayed for an hour owing to the ladders not coming up. The attack was made a little before midnight by Walker's Brigade and the ditch crossed, the rampart escalated and the defenders driven off; it was a very gallant performance. Walker now turned southward and captured the three next bastions in succession and pushed on, his bugles sounding the "Advance" until he gained the rear of the retrenchments defending the breaches, when he opened fire on the French. Picton's bugles in the Castle meanwhile had replied to Walker's and the French realizing that the game was up gave way. Thus was it that when the Light Division advanced they met with little or no opposition. Even then they found the breaches hard to surmount and the chained obstacles difficult to remove. Philippon withdrew his troops from the town and crossed over the bridge to Fort San Cristobal but surrendered a few hours later. Badajoz had fallen.

As may be imagined, the British casualties were terrible. The heaviest losses naturally fell on the Light and 4th Divisions being considerably over 900 in each, whilst the 3rd and 5th Divisions each lost over 500. The total losses during the night's work were 62 officers and 744 men killed and 251 officers and 2604 wounded; the grand total of killed and wounded during the whole siege and storm being 4,670. The Light Division suffered the most and not the 4th Division, as stated by Mr. Oman.¹ In the 4th Division the Regiment which suffered the most was the 40th with a total of 236 whilst in the 5th Division the 4th Foot lost 230.

Coming to the Regimental losses, among the Officers of the eight Companies of the 1st Battalion there were killed: Major Peter O'Hare and Lieutenant James Marshall Stokes whilst Captains Jeremiah Crampton, William Balvaird, Charles Gray and John M'Diarmid with

¹ See Oman, vol. v. Appendix ix. (pp. 594-95). Oman omits the losses of the 2nd Battalion Companies of the 95th Rifles. With these added the total comes to 977 for the Light Division. To this must be added the losses of the 1st and 3rd Caçadores. Those of the 4th Division were 925 all ranks.

History of the Rifle Brigade

Lieutenants William Johnston, John Gardiner, Donald M'Pherson, Jonathan Gustavus Forster and John Fitz Maurice were wounded. In the two Companies of the 2nd Battalion, Captain Thomas A. Diggle was killed and Lieutenants Walter Daeth Bedell and Henry Herbert Manners were wounded. In the four Companies of the 3rd Battalion were killed Lieutenants Tarleton Hovenden, George Marcus Cary, William Allix and Christopher Crudace, whilst Lieutenants Alexander Macdonald, Thomas Taylor Worsley, Duncan Stewart, William J. G. Farmer and lastly, a volunteer, Hugh Humble Lawson were wounded.¹ Of the above Crampton, M'Pherson and Macdonald died of their wounds.

The losses among the non-commissioned officers and men although very severe were below the usual proportion owing to the exceptional nature of the fighting which naturally took a heavier toll of the leaders.

KILLED.									
	Officers		Sergeants		Buglers		Riflemen		Total
1st Batt. ...	3	...	3	...	—	...	24	...	30
2nd Batt. ...	1	...	1	...	—	...	20	...	22
3rd Batt. ...	4	...	—	...	—	...	9	...	13
	8	...	4	...	—	...	53	...	65
WOUNDED.									
1st Batt. ...	9	...	15	...	3	...	136	...	163
2nd Batt. ...	2	...	3	...	—	...	31	...	36
3rd Batt. ...	5	...	2	...	—	...	45	...	52
	16	...	20	...	3	...	212	...	251

The French losses during the storm were extremely small, indeed French writers have asserted that only about a score of all ranks were killed and wounded on the night of the attack. General Philippon told Wellington that during the whole course of the siege he had lost 1,200 killed and wounded.

On the scenes of the next twenty-four hours it is best not to dwell.

¹ Lawson was granted a Commission in the Rifles in the following month.

As ever, drink was the first objective of the men and, once they were drunk, all else followed. Those who care for more details of the orgie of pillage and plunder should read Quartermaster Surtees' account of his experiences.¹ It was not till the afternoon of the 7th when the sack of the place had been in full swing for over fifteen hours that Wellington ordered that the plunder of Badajoz should cease and that officers' piquets should be sent in at daylight the next morning to take up any stragglers remaining. A gallows was erected in the *plaza* near the cathedral for the benefit of any marauders who might be captured but opinions differ as to whether it was actually used.

The gallant O'Hare's death was in keeping with his whole life. He was a reckless and cheery Irishman whom nought could subdue. At the time he fell he was Major of his Battalion and safe of early promotion, but nothing could daunt his martial ardour and he went to his death at the head of the Stormers of the Light Division with a laugh on his lips. It is on record that as he passed the halted ranks of the Light Division, standing in quarter-column at the foot of the glacis, he grasped an officer by the hand saying "*A Lieutenant-Colonel or cold meat in a few hours.*"²

At daylight his comrade found him "lying dead upon the breach stretched and naked"; for as is well-known the camp followers and harpies quickly stripped all the dead so soon as they could approach them with safety. He had two or three musket balls through his breast and a Sergeant of the Rifles, by name Fleming, who had been with him in many a fight lay dead beside him.

I do not propose to discuss in detail the world-famous sack of Badajoz. Enough has been said about Ciudad Rodrigo to give some idea of the causes which led to the excesses and of the feelings in the Army on the matter. At Badajoz even more than at Rodrigo there

¹ Surtees, *Twenty-five years in the Rifle Brigade*, pp. 137-152.

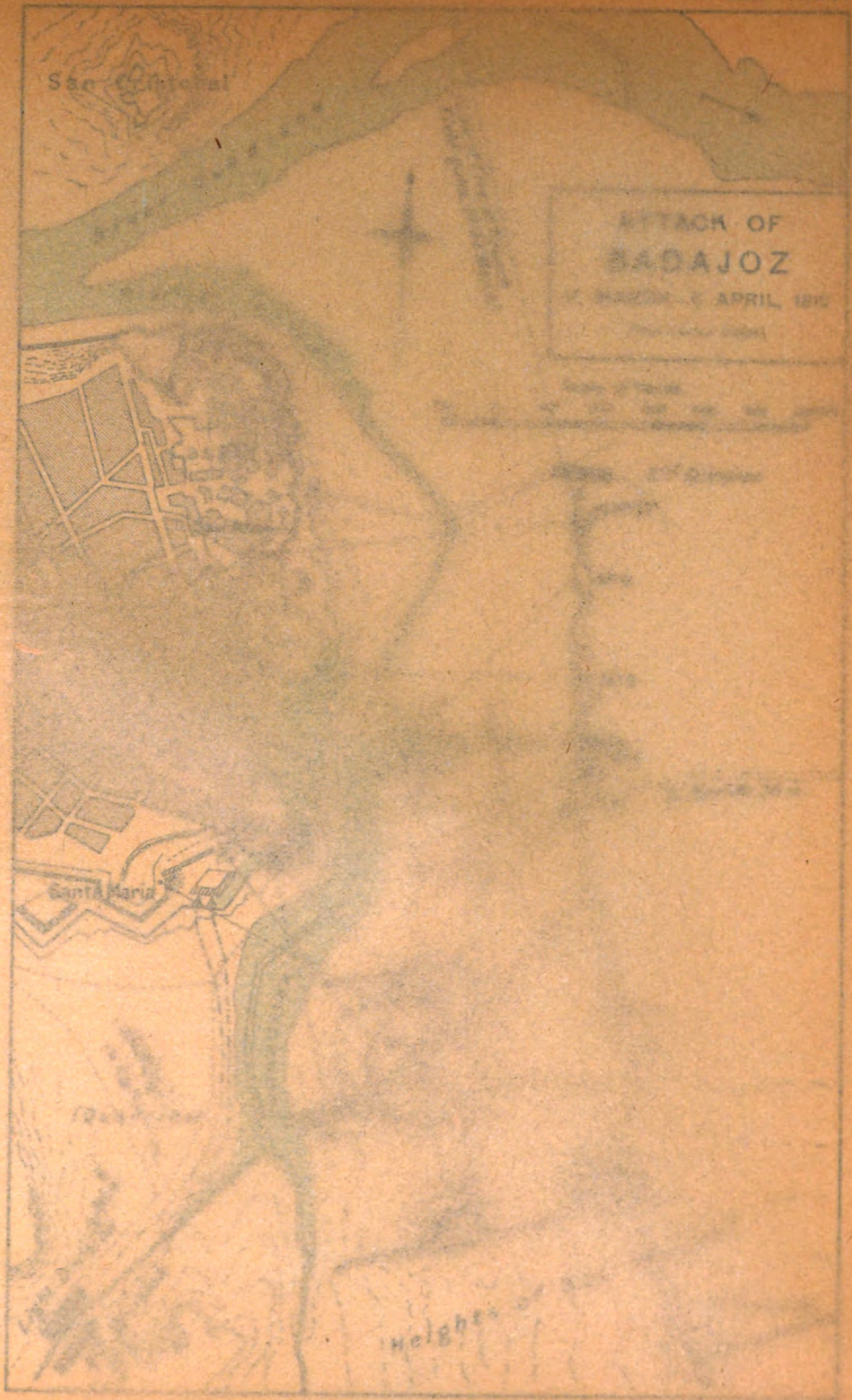
² Simmons, pp. 231-232.

are reasons for supposing that at least one and perhaps several of the commanders had held out to their men the prospect of the sack of the place as a reward. That many officers of the day considered that their men deserved some such reward is possible, but few, even with the recent experience of Rodrigo, imagined that their men could get so utterly out of hand as they did on this occasion. Every Regiment must be the guardian of its own honour and without doubt there were many corps which kept order for a time till the wave of indiscipline engulfed one and all. Thus it is on record that Cameron who was in command of the 1st Battalion took the necessary steps to keep his Battalion together so long as the safety of the place demanded it, promising the men that they should have the same indulgence as other corps as soon as the necessity for keeping together had ceased. He further told them that if any man quitted the ranks until he gave permission he would cause him to be put to death on the spot. This had the desired effect and it was not until between 9 and 10 a.m. when the whole French garrison had been secured and marched off to Elvas that he again addressed the Battalion and thanked them for their conduct throughout and concluded with "Now my men you may fall out and enjoy yourselves for the remainder of the day, but I shall expect to see you all in camp at the usual roll-call in the evening." Kincaid adds drily "When the evening came however in place of the usual tattoo report of 'all present' it was 'all absent.'"¹

Pass we now to a more cheerful incident of this tremendous Storm. It is a story which has been handed down through successive generations in the Rifle Brigade but which until the Boer War was unknown to the public and indeed to all but a few in the Army.

The day after the storm Harry Smith was at the door of his tent with Kincaid when two Spanish ladies came up, one of them a girl

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, pp. 285-286.

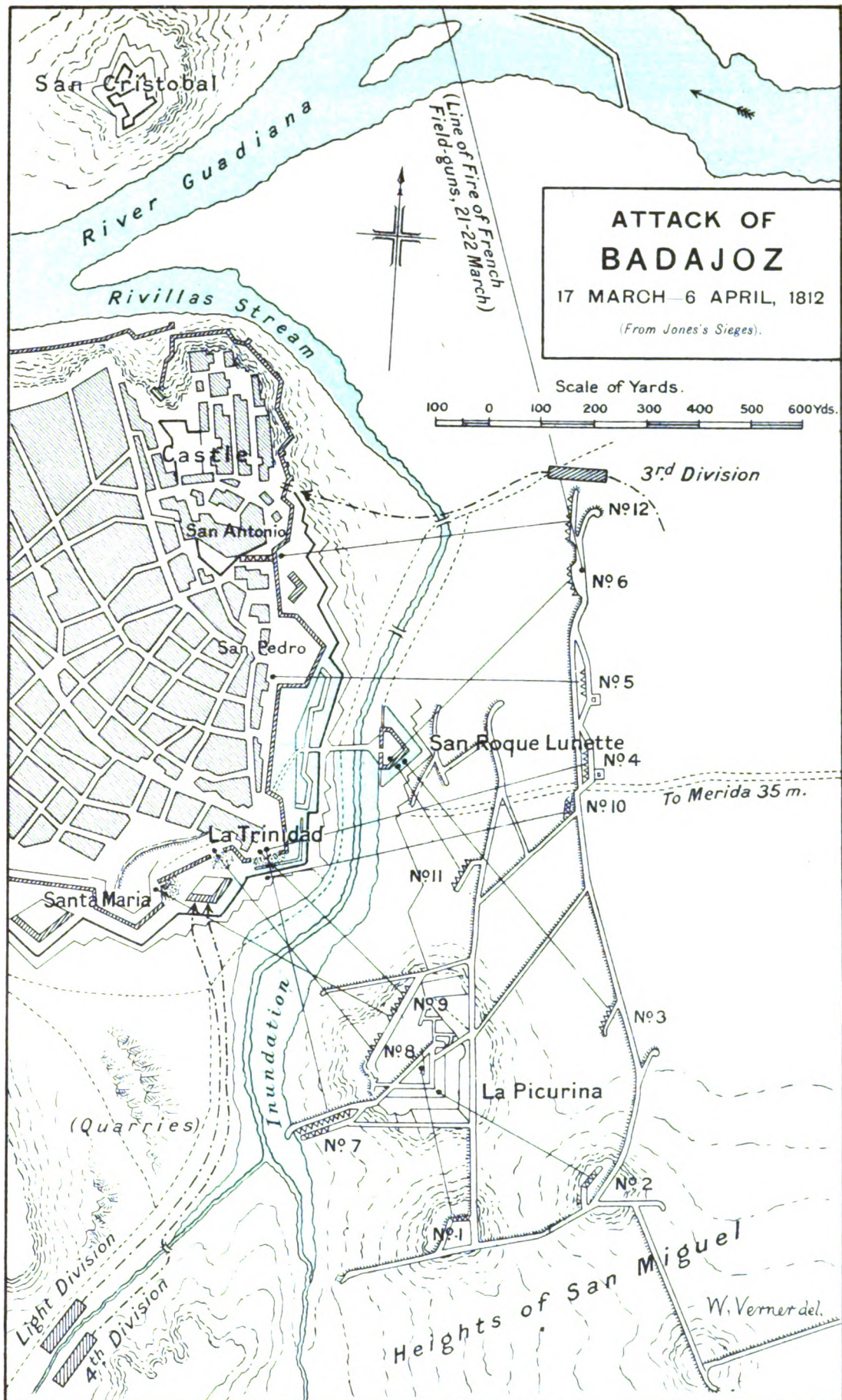


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¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, pp. 285-286.



ATTACK OF BADAJOZ

of under fifteen, and implored their protection. They belonged to an ancient and honourable Spanish family and were homeless, their house having been utterly wrecked by the soldiers and they themselves roughly handled, their bleeding ears showing where the drunken marauders had torn their flesh when snatching away their ear-rings. The husband of the elder was a Spanish Officer fighting in some distant province, the other was her young sister, by name Juana de Leon, fresh from a convent. Needless to say the two young Riflemen took care of them and both promptly fell in love with the younger one. Kincaid describes how her face "was so irresistibly attractive, surmounting a figure cast in nature's fairest mould, that to look on her was to love her, and I *did* love her ; but I never told my love and meanwhile, another and a more impudent fellow stepped in and won her !" This was Harry Smith who two days after this dramatic meeting married her and Lord Wellington gave her away ! This courageous girl accompanied her husband with the Light Division through the remaining years of the Peninsular War and also in the Waterloo Campaign. Later on she was with Sir Harry Smith in his campaigns in India and South Africa. Her name will endure for all time, for when Sir Harry Smith was Commanding at the Cape of Good Hope the townships of Harry Smith and Lady Smith were named after them. Ladysmith neither the British army nor the Nation is likely ever to forget.

Wellington in his despatches describes tersely how the 4th and Light Divisions "advanced to the assault of the breaches, led by their gallant officers, with the utmost intrepidity" and how "in the absence on account of sickness of Major-General Vandeleur and of Colonel Beckwith, Lieutenant-Colonel Barnard commanded the Light Division in the assault, and distinguished himself not less by the manner in which he made the arrangements for that operation, than by his personal gallantry in its execution."

Among the commanding officers Wellington mentions "Major O'Hare of the 95th unfortunately killed in the breach."

It has been said that Wellington set his troops an unduly heavy task in calling upon them to storm the breaches at Badajoz. Judging from the opinion of those best entitled to know, this seems to be true. It is true that Colonel Jones, the able Engineer, contended that a dense rush of troops would have carried the breaches. But those present say that there were plenty of dense rushes and that they were one and all met by an equally dense rush of bullets which mowed down the men. Kincaid considers that the defences at the top of the breaches should have been cleared away by our batteries before the assault or that at least a few six-pounder guns should have been run up to the crest of the glacis with the covering-party he accompanied, for they could have swept away the chevaux de frise with ease. Others are equally insistent on this point and in my old annotated copy of *Random Shots* the owner had marked all this portion with high approval and written in the margin "*without doubt* as the Spirit of the Governor and his *lethal Defences* at the breach were *well known* to Wellington!" When on the following morning Kincaid visited the breach, instead of seeing the place in ruins, he found "not a sword-blade deranged nor a sandbag removed!"¹ Others have stated the same.

I think that most soldiers will agree that to revisit the scene of great fights of former days is as a rule disappointing. For the ever-present difficulty is to identify correctly the actual spot where some famous deed of arms took place and it is this sense of incompleteness which detracts in a great measure from the interest of the task. Also the vast changes in the ranges both of small-arms and artillery makes most old battle-fields appear small and cramped and hence it is hard to visualize the great events which took place on them. But these objections do not arise in viewing an old fortress like Badajoz which to this day

¹ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, pp. 280-282.

remains in almost an identical condition with that which it presented on 6 April 1812 except that the breaches have been repaired and the armament removed. The same gloomy bastions are there, the same grim walls rear themselves above the same ditch with its horrid pools and unfinished ravelins and outworks. These latter to this day are as unfinished as they were in 1812—fitting memorials of the incurable Spanish habit of leaving work incompleated until “to-morrow.” Standing on the edge of the covered-way one can easily see where our Riflemen formed up under Cameron and also the exact point where the Light Division rushed forward with their ladders and entered the fatal ditch. The bones of some 400 British officers and men lie in the small space immediately at the feet of the observer—not much more than half-an-acre or so of level ground in extent. And it was at this point of the covered-way that on the morning after the strife seventeen officers of the Light Division were laid out, nine of these being of the Rifle Corps, silent witnesses that there was no lack of gallant men to lead the way.¹ It has been described how the breaches in La Trinidad and Santa Maria were strewn with dead from top to bottom and how the ground at the foot of these slopes was so “choked” with bodies as to make passage difficult.

The more one contemplates the scene of this famous Storm the more do words of admiration fail for the band of heroes who so freely gave their lives there. Napier alone can serve us here, for surely no finer epitaph on military achievement has ever been written than his—

“Who shall do justice to the bravery of the British soldiers !
Who shall measure out the Glory of Ridge,² of Macleod,³ of Nicholas,⁴

¹ Bugler William Green, *Travels and Adventures*, p. 29.

² Lieutenant-Colonel Ridge of the 5th (now Northumberland Fusiliers) who escalated the Castle walls and was killed at the gateway.

³ Lieutenant-Colonel Macleod of the 43rd, a very fine officer who fell in the assault on the Santa Maria.

⁴ Captain Nicholas R.E., the Engineer officer who guided the advance on La Trinidad.

of O'Hare of the 95th who perished at the head of the Stormers and with him nearly all the volunteers for that desperate service ! Who shall describe the martial fury of that desperate soldier of the Ninety-fifth who in his resolution to win, thrust himself beneath the chained sword-blades, and there suffered the enemy to dash his head to pieces with the ends of their muskets."¹

Who indeed can apportion glory when all fell so gloriously. Napier adds truly "For many died that night and there was much glory !"

Small wonder is it that Wellington, writing to Lord Canning some years later, said that at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz he had *lost the flower of his Army !*

¹ Napier, Book xvi. ch. v. Cope expresses a regret, which all will share, that the name of this most gallant Private Rifleman has not been preserved, but according to some accounts his head was completely smashed up and he may not have been recognizable.

CHAPTER XVII.

CAMPAIGN OF SALAMANCA, 1812.

Reasons for the failure of the French to relieve Badajoz. Soult's difficulties—Marmont's raid into Northern Portugal—Wellington marches on Ciudad Rodrigo—Marmont retires on Salamanca—Wellington halts at Fuente Guinaldo—Baron Charles Alten appointed to command the Light Division—The Bridge of Almaraz—Wellington improves his communications—A satisfactory inspection—Distribution of the French at opening of the Campaign—Wellington advances—Marmont falls back, Salamanca occupied—Attack on the forts—Marmont threatens to attack—The forts are captured—Marmont withdraws across the Douro—Skirmish at Rueda—The famous wine vaults—Tragic death of "Sir Arthur"—Marmont reinforced—Wellington retires to Castrejon—Narrow escape of Lord Wellington—Hard swearing—Marmont tries to outflank the Allies—The famous parallel march near Salamanca—The Tormes recrossed—The morn of Salamanca—The Battle: Wellington's dispositions—Description of ground—Marmont's fatal flank march—Wellington's counter-stroke. Pakenham's gallant attack—Charge of the Heavy Cavalry—The French left overwhelmed—Desperate fight for the Greater Arapil—The French defeated everywhere—Foy covers the retreat—French losses—Losses of the Allies.

AFTER the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo both Marmont and Soult foresaw that Wellington might make Badajoz his next point of attack. In consequence there was a sort of general arrangement between them for Marmont to leave his three divisions in the Tagus Valley so as to keep up communication between the two armies of Portugal and Andalucia.

See Map
"Lisbon to
Valladolid"
at end of
volume.

On 22 February Marmont wrote to assure Soult that should Wellington move on Badajoz he would march to his assistance and make a joint attack on the British Commander. Now came the result of Napoleon's orders and counter-orders to "the man at a distance."

On 2 March Marmont received peremptory orders from Napoleon to withdraw two of his divisions from the Tagus Valley to Salamanca. Napoleon at the same time told him not to be anxious about Badajoz, but that should Wellington move against it, he, as a counter-stroke, was to invade northern Portugal.

When on 20 March Soult, who was before Cadiz, heard that Wellington had arrived before Badajoz he set to work to gather troops to march to its relief. But he could only spare 13,000 men, for Cadiz had to be blockaded and Ballesteros, as usual, had to be kept at a distance. He however drew in d'Erlon who joined him at Llerena on 4 April, thus raising his total force to 25,000. Three days later, on arriving at Villafranca, he got news of the fall of Badajoz. He was of course too weak to attack Wellington's army, for the Anglo-Portuguese forces were some 55,000 strong. During his absence from Seville a small Spanish force from Niebla and Ballesteros from the Serrania had cut his communications with Malaga, Granada and Cordoba and pushed close up to Seville and Soult returned at speed to that city, leaving d'Erlon at Llerena with two divisions of infantry and a division of cavalry.

Wellington sent General Cotton with a brigade of light cavalry and two brigades of heavy cavalry which came up with the French cavalry at Villa Garcia about four miles north of Llerena and after a sharp cavalry affair routed the French horse and pursued them up to Llerena where they gained the protection of d'Erlon's guns and infantry. Soult, expecting Wellington to invade Andalucia, now withdrew d'Erlon to Seville, but Wellington had other and more pressing work in hand; for Marmont had carried out Napoleon's plan and made a raid into Portugal.

Wellington, as we have seen, had reckoned on Ciudad Rodrigo, with the support of the Spanish troops under Carlos d'España and the Portuguese militia, to keep Marmont in check during his absence in

the south. The Spanish Governor of Rodrigo had however done little or nothing to carry out Wellington's orders and the fortress was ill-supplied with food ; also the defences of Almeida were yet unfinished. Marmont with over 25,000 men, bridging equipment, and scaling ladders and supplies for two weeks, appeared before Rodrigo on 31 March and summoned the place. Then, leaving troops to blockade it he crossed the Agueda and advanced into Portugal. Victor Alten with the 1st German Hussars, who had been left to watch the road from Salamanca, upon the approach of a small body of French cavalry abandoned the only passable ford across the Agueda and retired in haste through Sabugal on Castello Branco. Marmont threw his bridge and Carlos d'España fell back with his small force to Almeida. At this critical moment Trant with some 6,000 Portuguese fortunately came up from Lamego. Marmont had sent on two divisions to storm Almeida but the officer commanding these, on seeing the Portuguese, imagined them to be British troops and rejoined his master on the Coa. Trant thereupon marched to Guarda to cover the British magazines and the hospital at Celorico ; here he was joined by Wilson with his Portuguese, also 6,000 strong.

Marmont, leaving one division to blockade Rodrigo, now marched through Fuente Guinaldo to Alfayates where he was joined by his two divisions from Almeida and the united force pushed southward through Sabugal on Castello Branco. The Portuguese there made a gallant stand but on the 12th were obliged to retire. Next day Marmont, having come to the end of his supplies, had to fall back northward on Guarda. Trant retired before him and when crossing the Mondego was roughly handled by the French cavalry. Wilson who was with his Portuguese at Coimbra destroyed most of the stores there before he heard of Marmont's retirement.

Wellington was now well assured that there was no chance of Soult and Marmont uniting to attack him, so leaving Hill with the same

force he had in 1811, and another cavalry brigade in addition to keep an eye on d'Erlon, he ordered his divisions to march northward. On 12 April less than a week after the storm of Badajoz the Light Division marched to Campo Mayor and the following day to Arronches where it bivouacked in a wood. On the 16th the Light Division moving as advance-guard of the Army reached Castello Branco. The weather was very bad and the rivers in flood and, knowing this, Wellington decided to bring his divisions singly across the Tagus so as to be able to put the men under shelter by night and avoid bivouacking in the heavy rain. To carry out this plan he frequently halted the head of the column. Owing to this, on the 19th the Light Division was only eight miles north of Castello Branco with the 3rd Division in cantonments on its left.

Marmont's whole force was on this day between Sabugal and Penamacor and, the floods having swept away his bridge across the Agueda, he was compelled to send his guns by the small bridge at Villarrubia near its head-waters so as to regain Ciudad Rodrigo. His rear-guard remained at Alfayates until early on the 22nd and succeeded in fording the Agueda above Rodrigo on that and the following days.

Wellington's cavalry entered Alfayates on the 22nd and on the 24th, having ascertained that Marmont had recrossed the Agueda and was in full retreat on Salamanca, he ordered a halt. It is interesting to note that Marmont's rapid retreat was mainly due to want of supplies, for the whole country from Rodrigo to the Tormes had been cleared. He seems to have been unaware of Wellington's approach in force.

Shortly after the capture of Badajoz Baron Charles Alten was appointed to the command of the Light Division in succession to Robert Craufurd. It will be recalled how at the time when Craufurd fell, Vandeleur and Colborne, the two Brigadiers of the Light Division had been wounded. Thus was it that Lieutenant-Colonel Barnard had

up till now been in temporary command of the Division. Charles Alten was popular with the Light Division and even the critical Leach has nothing but praise for him.

It is not easy to apportion the blame for the failures of Soult and Marmont. Napoleon's orders to strengthen Suchet no doubt weakened both of them, whilst his endless orders and counter-orders from Paris made it almost impossible to hope for success, for Napoleon persistently magnified the numbers at the disposal of his Marshals and ignored their very real difficulties. Marmont's whole force, allowing for the defence of the Asturias and the various garrisons and other duties, did not amount to more than 37,000 and he was utterly lacking in food and transport in a country cleared of all supplies. On arriving at Salamanca he cantoned his divisions as close as he could consistent with obtaining food, so as to be able to concentrate them in five days. Foy's Division remained in the Tagus Valley and Bonnet's in Asturias, Soult remained at Seville with d'Erlon near Villanueva on the Guadiana.

Wellington took up his Headquarters at Fuente Guinaldo and distributed his divisions widely from the Douro on the north to the Sierra Morena southwards, in front of his main supply depots at Elvas, Castello Branco and Coimbra. At this time he was more than usually worried by his Spanish allies, for much of his recent troubles were due to the supineness of Carlos d'España and others in neglecting to carry out his orders, and he had thus lost valuable supplies both at Castello Branco and Coimbra. It was only after he had threatened to destroy both the fortresses he had captured that the Spanish authorities could be induced to send men to hold them. In May however he was able to order his long deferred plan for the destruction of the bridge at Almaraz to be carried out. This was all the more important in that the boat-bridge there, since the capture of Soult's pontoon train at Badajoz, was the only means of crossing the Tagus between Toledo and the Portuguese frontier. The bridge was strongly fortified, with redoubts on either bank.

Hill advanced by Merida with two brigades and some Portuguese, altogether some 6,000 men, Graham with the 1st and 6th Divisions being ordered to Portalegre to protect Badajoz against any attempt by Soult to recapture it. At 9 p.m. on 18 May Hill attacked the fort at the bridgehead and stormed it and with the captured guns of the place drove the French out of the redoubt on the northern bank. The towers and defences were now blown up and the bridge burned. It was a splendid and audacious performance and effectively severed the communications between Soult and Marmont.

Wellington, who had made Badajoz and Rodrigo his advanced bases, had ordered the channels of the Douro and Tagus to be made navigable and by this means was able to bring up supplies by water to Barca de Alba on the Douro, only forty miles from Rodrigo and to Alcantara on the Tagus about thirty miles east of Castello Branco. At Alcantara the old Roman bridge had been destroyed and here it was that Major Sturgeon of the Royal Staff Corps made his famous suspension bridge—the first in Europe—out of materials from Elvas. By the construction of this bridge the road from Badajoz to Ciudad Rodrigo was shortened by over eighty miles, for the long detour by Villa Velha was eliminated.

During the remainder of the months of April and May the Light Division was cantoned in its old quarters in the villages on the left bank of the Azava—the 1st Battalion being at Ituero and Castellejo and the 3rd at La Encina. The time was occupied in refitting the Regiment for the coming march into Spain; the clothing was patched and repaired and, when possible, renewed and new boots provided.

On 27 May Wellington reviewed the Division between Fuente Guinaldo—where were his headquarters—and El Bodon and it is recorded that the men's clothing was patched with pieces of many colours whilst that of the officers was equally lacking in uniformity.¹

¹ The portrait of Captain Kent reproduced from an original water-colour sketch was most probably done about this time.

Wellington who had a soul above details of uniform on active service and cared not how the men dressed, so long as they were clothed and well equipped and ready to march, told the Riflemen that "they looked well and in good fighting order."¹

Before describing Wellington's advance on Salamanca and Madrid, we must see what was Napoleon's final distribution of the 230,000 men he had left in Spain to hold that country against the Allies before he started from Paris for Dresden in May. The changes were many and varied. King Joseph was appointed to the chief command and had with him Jourdan and 18,000 men, known as the "Army of the Centre." Soult was left with some 56,000 men, "the Army of the South" in Andalucia. Dorsenne with the "Army of the North" had 30,000 men under his command. Suchet was given the "Army of Aragon" which was now re-named the "Army of Valencia," about 22,000 strong. Decaen was to command the "Army of Catalonia" 25,000 strong, whilst a new force, styled the "Army of the Ebro," part of the Reserve under Reille, was organized from various sources and charged with many duties, amongst them to keep up communication with the "Army of the Centre," also with the armies of Portugal and Valencia. One result of all these changes was that Marmont's "Army of Portugal" was reduced to 15,000. It is clear that the Emperor's idea was that Joseph should be content to keep open the line of communications with France and to suppress the guerrilleros until his return from Russia, when he would have ample troops to finish off the Spanish business.

From January to May there was much partisan warfare throughout all the northern provinces, whilst in Catalonia and other parts there were some very sharp encounters between French troops and Spanish Regulars in which both sides alternately suffered considerable losses.

¹ Simmons, p. 234.

The unfortunate Joseph was bewildered by the difficulties which arose on every side of him : these were not lessened by Dorsenne in April refusing point-blank to obey his orders, whilst Soult in the following month told him he had not been told to look upon him as his military chief.

After many hesitations Joseph and Jourdan came to the conclusion that Wellington, when he moved, would leave Andalucia alone and advance on Madrid and so sent orders to Marmont to hold on at Salamanca, should the British appear there in force, but, if not, he was to march with four of his divisions to Almaraz. Soult they ordered to reinforce d'Erlon on the Guadiana, where he could keep Hill in check, or, if necessary, march to Arzobispo to cover Madrid. Suchet in Valencia now told his troops that they were under his sole command, and Dorsenne and his successor Caffarelli alike denied that they were under Joseph. King Joseph and Jourdan finding that nobody would obey them appealed to Napoleon, who was over a thousand miles away and fully occupied with his great advance into Russia.

Soult, convinced that Wellington would deal a blow at Andalucia, remained inactive during all the summer at Seville and d'Erlon with about 17,000 continued to watch Hill in Estremadura. Hill's force was some 22,000 strong of which 8,000 were British. For various reasons Hill did not attack his enemy and it was not till 13 September that he was ordered to cross the Tagus at Almaraz and march northward.

In June Wellington crossed the Agueda with an army of about 47,000 men, made up of 28,000 British and Germans, nearly 15,000 Portuguese and over 3,000 Spaniards under Carlos d'España. The advance on Salamanca was made on three parallel roads. The Light Division with the 1st German Hussars formed the advance-guard and moved in front of the centre column. The Division left their cantonments on 11 June and bivouacked in a wood near Ciudad Rodrigo and on the 13th marched to Alba de Yeltes; next day

they halted at Sancho Bueno and on the 15th at Melilla. On the 16th the cavalry drove in some French horse and the Light Division crossed the Valmuza stream and bivouacked near some low hills about five miles from Salamanca. It was found that Marmont had constructed three strong forts, using the masonry from some old convents which commanded the bridge at Salamanca. He had also destroyed the other bridges across the Tormes. On Wellington's approach Marmont, who had only two divisions with him, left Salamanca and moved northward towards the Douro calling in the remainder of his forces and also Bonnet's Division from Asturias. See Map
XXV, p. 432.

On the 17th Wellington forded the river both above and below the city and, detaching a small force to watch Marmont's movements, he took post on the heights of San Cristobal, six miles northward of it, the 6th Division being left to invest the forts. Wellington entered Salamanca on this day and had a great reception from the inhabitants who had been oppressed by the invaders for over three years. The same night the work of reducing the forts was begun. On the 18th the Light Division which had been in bivouac near the ford of Santa Marta moved to Aldea Lengua, about six miles east of Salamanca and there was some skirmishing between our cavalry and the French horse. On the 20th there was a sudden order to stand to arms; Marmont, who had gathered five out of his eight Divisions—about 25,000 strong, being reported as advancing from Fuente Sauco. During the afternoon of this day Marmont advanced to the foot of the heights occupied by the Allies until he was within a short cannon-shot and it is recorded that Wellington was sorely tempted to attack him, but refrained. Marmont after throwing a few shells at the Allies withdrew to some heights about two miles distant and the Allies bivouacked on their position. On the following day nothing occurred. Marmont was joined by more of his outlying troops, thus raising his available force to 35,000 men.

On the 21st Wellington sent some light infantry to drive the French

out of Moriscos, a small village they had occupied in front of his right. The next day Marmont reconnoitred Wellington's position very closely, so closely indeed that he narrowly escaped capture by some of our cavalry sent out to try to cut him off. Later, he attempted to occupy a hill opposite to the right of the Allies whence he was driven by the 7th Division. Marmont now made up his mind that he was not strong enough to attack Wellington in his present position and decided to abandon the Salamanca forts to their fate and after nightfall on the 22nd fell back to Aldea Rubia near the Tormes about nine miles east of Salamanca. Wellington on the following day made a corresponding change of front and occupied the village of Aldea Lengua with his centre, his right being at the ford of Santa Marta and his left in the village of Moriscos. On this day the Light Division had a small affair of outposts when they cleared the French from Aldea Lengua. Early on the 24th two French divisions with about twenty guns and some cavalry forded the river near Huerta and advanced as if to cut Wellington's line of communication. Graham with two Divisions and our cavalry promptly stopped this attempt and Marmont withdrew his force across the river. Again Wellington did not follow up his advantage as he certainly might have. On the 23rd the British guns, which had been hurriedly withdrawn on the 20th, were again placed in battery and re-opened fire on the forts and that night the 6th Division was ordered to carry them by escalade. The attack was made in a half-hearted manner and failed with a loss of 120 killed and wounded, General Bowes, the leader, who showed great heroism, being amongst the slain. In consequence of this failure the Light Division was ordered to provide a storming party to consist of two men from each company to storm the San Vincente fort, the strongest of the three. The party actually paraded and marched down to the attack, when it was for some reason counter-ordered. The forts surrendered on the 27th and Marmont retreated the same night on Toro and Tordesillas.

On the 29th before dawn Wellington started in pursuit. The Light Division halted at Castellanos de Moriscos and bivouacked and on the succeeding days it marched by Parada de Rubiales, Castrillo and Alaejos, halting on 1 July at Nava del Rey. Meanwhile the British cavalry had on the previous day overtaken the French cavalry and had kept touch of them up to Rueda where on 1 July some French infantry made a stand so as to cover the withdrawal of Marmont's main body across the Douro at the bridge of Tordesillas, the only one Marmont had not destroyed. Our Horse Artillery now came up and opened with shrapnel on the French who were thrown into some confusion. Soon after, an advanced party of our Riflemen came on the scene and joined in the skirmish, capturing a few prisoners, among them a Sergeant-Major of cavalry. At this time one of our Sergeants had fallen into the hands of the French, who sent in a flag of truce and offered to exchange him for their Sergeant-Major on the ground that the latter was about to be made Adjutant of his Regiment. It is pleasant to know that the exchange was duly effected. The Light Division arrived and entered the town as the last of the French were leaving it—too late to inflict any damage on the foe.

See Map
"Lisbon to
Valladolid"
at end of
volume.

Marmont had taken up a position in rear of the Douro at Tordesillas with his right on Pollos on that river and his left at Simancas on the Pisuerga, an affluent of the Douro. On 3 July the Light Division was sent on to Tordesillas and the 3rd Division to Pollos where the fords were found too deep. The Light Division was withdrawn to Rueda in the evening. Here it remained for nearly two weeks, occupying the town during the heat of the day and moving out every night into bivouac a mile in front of it. Experience had taught Wellington that nothing caused more sickness than exposure to the sun during the Spanish summer. Also that in the event of a night alarm, the troops in bivouac could be fallen in and moved off at least an hour quicker than if left in cantonments. The 3rd

Division re-occupied Pollos and the rest of the Army were in rear about Medina del Campo.

Rueda is in the centre of a great wine-growing country and the little town is famous for its huge wine vaults excavated in the sides of the adjacent hills. These great vaults, well stocked with wines, would have been a great attraction for the British soldier at any time but after the recent arduous marches under the almost tropical midsummer sun of Old Castile they were doubly appreciated—more especially since the adjacent country produced a light effervescing white wine “a most delicious beverage” which in the hot weather was simply irresistible. Our men on entering the wine caves found that the enemy had equally appreciated their merits, for they came across the bodies of several murdered Frenchmen, no doubt stragglers, hideously mutilated by the Spaniards. Here it was that a private Rifleman named Taylor met with death of an almost classic character. This man had served with the Regiment since it came out to the Peninsula and was known to all his comrades by the name of “Sir Arthur” owing to his supposed facial resemblance to Lord Wellington. One day at Rueda he mysteriously disappeared. By chance another Rifleman who went to take a drink from a large headless butt of wine in one of the dark cellars, on stooping down to take a sip, came in contact with the big nose of the unfortunate “Sir Arthur” who had slipped into the butt and been drowned! “Thus perished Sir Arthur, a little beyond the prime of life but in what the soldiers considered a prime death,”¹ was the epitaph of the Light Division on his career.

During these two weeks on the Douro there was a tacit armistice between the two Armies, the men bathing at the same spots, exchanging civilities and even sharing rations! Not a shot was fired. Meanwhile Bonnet had arrived, but all Marmont's appeals to the other Armies in Spain to send him reinforcements met with no response. King

¹ *Random Shots*, p. 333.

Joseph in desperation, hearing that Marmont had fallen back to the Douro, sent Soult a peremptory order to send 10,000 men to Toledo at once. This Soult absolutely refused to do. Thus was it that neither Marmont nor Wellington would attack each other. Marmont remained in his strong position and did little beyond repairing the bridges on either flank. At last on 16 July Marmont pushed Bonnet's Division across the bridge at Toro on his right—a movement which Wellington immediately countered by sending some troops thither. After nightfall Marmont withdrew Bonnet and next day passed the bulk of his force across the river at Tordesillas and made a forced march on Nava del Rey. Wellington on the night of the 16th had meanwhile ordered his centre, with the Light and 4th Divisions and Cotton's brigade of cavalry to march to Castrejon, the remainder of his force concentrating near Canizal westward of the Guareña. On the 17th hearing of Marmont's arrival at Nava del Rey, he sent three brigades of cavalry to Alaejos and the 5th Division to Torrecilla de la Orden.

Very early on the 18th the cavalry with the Light Division had some sharp skirmishing with the French horse advancing from Nava del Rey. Wellington accompanied by Beresford rode up to Castrejon about 7 a.m. and at this moment a daring French cavalry leader made a dash at the two Horse Artillery guns with Cotton. What followed has been described by several eye-witnesses but probably none of these saw as much or was concerned more personally in the affair than the subaltern of Rifles, who with thirty men of his Company chanced to be on outlying piquet at the exact point attacked. The piquet, which had been posted since the previous night, soon after daylight came under fire of the enemy's artillery, the round-shot pitching all about the post. Suddenly the commander was startled by a terrific yell from behind some rising ground on his left front and realizing that danger was in the air promptly ran with his men and took post behind a broad deep ditch about a hundred yards in rear. Next moment Wellington with

See Map
XXV, p. 432.

his Staff and a cloud of French and English Dragoons and Horse Artillery intermixed burst into view over the hill recently occupied by our Riflemen "at full cry hammering at each other's heads in one confused mass." Wellington with his Staff and the two guns took shelter behind the rallied body of Riflemen, whilst the cavalry swept past, but neither the Riflemen nor a piquet of the 43rd on their right ventured to fire a shot, so utterly intermixed were the combatants. A few minutes later the French returned, closely pursued by our horsemen who had picked up a reinforcement in the shape of a squadron of our Heavy Dragoons. It must have been a comic scene, although it might easily have become a tragic one. Marshal Beresford and the greater part of the Staff remained with their swords drawn and Wellington, who we are told "did not look more than half-pleased, silently despatched some of them with orders." It is recorded that the language which this affair evoked was of the very strongest. "General Bock and his huge German orderly dragoon with their swords drawn cursed the whole time, to a very large amount," but, their remarks being in German, mercifully the ears of our Riflemen were spared their full effect. In justice to our Horse Artillery Captain Jenkinson, who commanded the two guns, was equally voluble and explicit but his wrath was directed against himself for not having released the catch of his sword in consequence of which he was unable to draw it when our cavalry were thrown back on his guns and he was forced to fly.¹

Soon after this Cotton with his cavalry brigade came in from the right and the piquets were withdrawn and joined the Light Division. Marmont, seeing that only part of the British force was in front of him, brought up his infantry from Alaejos, thus turning Wellington's left flank. Wellington thereupon ordered the three Divisions with him to fall back on Torrecilla ; this they did, each battalion moving in close

¹ Kincaid. *Adventures*, pp. 155-57.

column of companies ready to form square if attacked, our cavalry guarding their flanks and rear. The movements which followed have been described as "the most beautiful military spectacle imaginable." The French pressed on hoping to turn Wellington's left and the British continued their movement and soon both Armies were marching in parallel lines across a perfectly level plain and hardly 500 yards apart. The Light Division "brought up the rear of our infantry, marching with the order and precision of a field day in open column of companies and in perfect readiness to receive the enemy in any shape." The French had a huge force of cavalry close at hand equally ready to pounce upon the British.

The country was very open and favourable for cavalry, and the British infantry, now moving in quarter-distance columns, marched steadily for ten miles, taking up distant points to march upon and avoiding all villages and places where it would have been necessary to defile. The objective was some high ground beyond the Guareña river. The heat was terrific and the clouds of dust from the sandy plain most suffocating whilst the absence of water was very trying. Now and again the brigade of Horse Artillery with the Light Division unlimbered and fired a few rounds at the enemy and once the French cavalry made a dash at it and for a moment got possession of the guns. At another time a party of French infantry ran forward and obliged the Light Division to leave the road and move through the standing corn. At last the banks of the Guareña were reached. When crossing the river the 5th Division halted to drink and it seems that, on the arrival of the Light Division, man and horse made a rush to quench their thirst. The French at once brought some guns into play from the high ground and Leach complains that they pounded them with round-shot whilst trying to swallow a mouthful of the lukewarm muddy water. Once across the river the Army took up a position on some high ground, the 4th Division on the left near Castrillo, the Light Division in the

centre, and the 5th Division on the right near Cañizal, the remaining divisions forming further to the right at Vallesa.

A French column under Clausel consisting of a brigade of dragoons, a battalion of infantry and three guns now crossed the ford near Castrillo but were charged by Victor Alten and driven back with a loss of the brigadier and about 100 men. But a counter-attack made by our cavalry was a failure. Two British regiments, the 27th and 40th, were now sent forward who, after a volley, charged the French infantry and drove them off. Our cavalry captured about 150 prisoners. In this affair we had 145 of our cavalry killed, wounded and taken, the total losses of the Allies during the day being 442, of which a third belonged to the 27th and 40th. The French losses are unknown but reckoned to be about the same. During this day several men dropped dead and others, exhausted, fell into the hands of the enemy. The Portuguese suffered particularly. The firing ceased at nightfall and the British Army camped, for it now carried tents. During the night Wellington ordered the position to be strengthened by some small field-works.

The next morning was uneventful, the heat being very great ; in the afternoon a desultory cannonade commenced. The Light Division stood to its arms and was greeted with a few shot and shell for sheer annoyance. A round shot took off the head of an unfortunate Private Rifleman who had only just joined the Regiment. "Things of this kind seem droll," moralizes Simmons. About 4 p.m. it was seen that the French were again in movement to their left (southward) and Wellington made a corresponding movement with the 1st and Light Divisions. The cannonade ceased at sundown and once again the two hostile forces halted and bivouacked, the British on the heights of Vallesa, the French at Tarazona, in fighting formation very near to one another and fully expecting a general action on the morrow. As a matter of fact Marmont who knew the country intimately had decided

to try to march across the Guareña higher up at Cantalapiédra so as to gain the extensive plateau which stretches away towards Salamanca.

At daylight on the 20th, so far as concerned the men in the ranks, the French were out of sight. Wellington of course knew from his cavalry of their direction and quickly realized that Marmont had at last turned his right flank and that he must follow him with all speed, keeping along the lower ground. Soon after daylight the advance was resumed and shortly our Riflemen came in sight of the French, who had been concealed by some intervening ground, in close proximity moving southward. Then followed a day almost similar to the 18th, the two Armies moving on parallel courses. Both were covered by their cavalry and whenever a bend of the road brought the Armies nearer together the light artillery on either side opened fire, but with small effect. "So close were the Armies that an order to form line would have brought on a general engagement in a few minutes."¹

But however admirable and precise were the movements of the fighting men who thus strode along, the baggage and followers formed a long straggling tail to the allied column and although Wellington attempted to head off the French at Cantalpino, he could not do so. The fact is that the French had fairly outmarched us ; so, ordering the 5th Division to protect the baggage and stragglers, he inclined westward towards Aldea Rubia and soon the two Armies began to drift apart and were out of sight of one another. A short halt was called in the afternoon, for the heat was very great and the dust suffocating, whilst the necessity of continuously marching in close parade formation put an abnormal strain on the men.

The column marched till a late hour in the evening and on halting near Cabeza Velloso the glare of the bivouac fires of the French near Babila Fuente could be seen and it was evident that they had gained the

¹ Leach, *Rough Sketches*, 271.

ford at Huerta on the Tormes. Wellington realized that he had been out-manœuvred and at dawn of the 21st marched to the position at San Cristobal. He saw clearly that Marmont's plan was to cut him from his line of communications through Ciudad Rodrigo and that he must give up all ideas of an offensive campaign and devote his energies to securing his retreat to Portugal.

But Marmont's want of decision continued to dog him. Instead of following up his success he remained halted till 10 o'clock. He then crossed the Tormes by the ford of Huerta and above, leaving a division on the heights of Babila Fuente, and at nightfall bivouacked between Alba de Tormes and Salamanca, holding Calvarrasa de Arriba as an advanced post.

Wellington on becoming aware of Marmont's march ordered his force to cross the Tormes at Salamanca and take up a general position facing east with its left on the Tormes near Santa Marta and the right near the village of Los Arapiles some four miles to the south. He left D'Urban's Portuguese cavalry and the 3rd Division under Pakenham (Picton was on the sick-list) entrenched at Cabrerizos to keep an eye on the fords west of Babila Fuente. The bulk of the Army crossed the river by the bridge at Salamanca and did not gain their bivouacs until after dark. The British advanced cavalry posts pushed forward to Calvarrasa de Abajo. The Light Division crossed by the deep ford of Santa Marta and just as they gained the western bank a terrific thunderstorm broke, followed by torrents of rain. The lightning played along the men's arms and many horses, both English and French, broke from their pickets in terror and came galloping through the bivouacs. All accounts testify to the extraordinary fury of the storm and the blackness of the night.

The morning of the 22nd after the great storm was brilliantly fine. It had been Wellington's intention to continue to fall back on Ciudad Rodrigo, unless the opportunity should occur for him to strike Marmont a decisive blow. Anything short of this would have been useless for he

was well aware that Marmont would soon receive a reinforcement from Caffarelli ; King Joseph also was on the march to join him with 14,000 men. So he sent off all his baggage early under escort of D'Urban's cavalry and disposed his Divisions out of sight of the French in rear of the heights on a front of about three miles, the 7th Division alone being visible to Marmont when he went out to reconnoitre in the early morning. Marmont on his part came to the conclusion that Wellington was about to retreat by Tejares to the Ciudad Rodrigo road and that the 7th Division he saw in front of him was the rear-guard of the Allies. After some hesitation he ordered his troops to march round the southern flank of Wellington's force and endeavour to outflank him and perhaps cut his line of communications.

THE BATTLE OF SALAMANCA.

22 JULY, 1812.

The battle which followed is known to the French to this day as "Los Arapiles" from the two remarkably shaped isolated hills which dominate a portion of the field of battle, one of these, called by us the Lesser Arapil, formed a bastion or outwork on the right flank of the big ridge which covered Wellington's front. The second or Greater Arapil, 1,000 yards south of the first is of similar shape, absolutely flat-topped with very steep sides and with serrated rocks near the crest line. In a valley which runs between the hills about a mile west of them lies the village of Los Arapiles.

The Battle of Salamanca, as Sir William Cope truly says, was the *only* one of Wellington's great victories in which the 95th Rifles did not bear a prominent part. Cope, of course, excepts Talavera which was fought before the Light Brigade had joined the Army. At Salamanca all three battalions were present in whole or in part but the Light Division was posted on the extreme left of the British position

where Wellington had good cause to reckon upon its presence in certain events which did not happen. So it came about that, owing to Marmont attempting to manœuvre by his left, the stress of the great battle fell upon the troops of the Allies on the right and centre and those on the left were merely occupied in keeping the French right in check. Had Wellington's orders been obeyed by our Spanish Allies, the presence of the Light Division on the left would have produced, as we shall see, the most far-reaching results.

Wellington's force numbered about 50,000, of which one-half were British, with 60 guns, whereas although Marmont had only 47,000 men with 78 guns, he had the immense advantage of commanding men of one nationality—all fine fighters.

Marmont to cover his movement to outflank Wellington ordered Bonnet to seize both the Arapiles. The French quickly occupied the Greater Arapil and brought up some guns there, but Wellington was too quick for them and some caçadores gained the Lesser Arapil before the French could reach it. Foy's Division with Férey's in support, about 10,000 infantry with 1,300 cavalry, were left to hold Calverrasa de Arriba whilst four Divisions (20,000 strong) marched to the south-east of the Greater Arapil and Thomière's Division pushed on still further to some heights south of the village of Los Arapiles.

Wellington's counter-move to this was to occupy the village of Los Arapiles and form a fighting line facing south and east with the Lesser Arapil at the salient. He ordered the Light Division to hold the ground west of Calvarrasa de Arriba, with the 7th Division in support and Bock's German Hussars on its flank, whilst Pakenham was to cross the Tormes and take post at Aldea Tejada, three miles south of Salamanca and the same distance north-west of Arapiles. Speaking broadly, when these movements were carried out Wellington's right was near Aldea Tejada with his centre on the Lesser Arapil fronting south and with his left flank refused. And now it was that Marmont

made a fatal mistake. Seeing the clouds of dust raised by Pakenham in his march to Aldea Tejada, he jumped to the conclusion that Wellington was in retreat on Rodrigo and that since this naturally meant that the bulk of his forces must surely be on the right (or west) of the Allied position, he could not do better than reinforce his own left. Accordingly he gave orders for such a movement, reckoning that he would thus be able to strike in on Wellington's line of retreat on the Rodrigo road. It was a fatal error! For the French commanders not only carried out Marmont's orders, apparently under the genuine belief that the parallel race of the two Armies during the preceding days was to be resumed, but one of them, Thomières, greatly exceeded them.

Thus Wellington from the Lesser Arapil had the satisfaction of seeing half of Marmont's force deliberately marching away from his centre! He instantly ordered up three of his Divisions from behind the shelter of the hills and Marmont now seeing them for the first time and, realizing that the Allies were in strength dangerously near his weakened centre, sent for Férey and Sarrut to reinforce him.

Wellington himself galloped over to Aldea Tejada and ordered Pakenham to advance and seize the heights about two and a half miles in front of him. Pakenham at once advanced and, owing to the ground being favourable, his approach was at first undetected.

At this time Thomière's Division was strung out for over a mile marching across his front and before it could be properly formed up, D'Urban's cavalry charged in among the French and caused great confusion. Soon after this, Pakenham's infantry, advancing under a storm of grapeshot, arrived; Pakenham had formed his leading Brigade into three lines when on the march and the leading line at once charged the French and broke up their columns. Wellington had meanwhile ordered the 5th Division in his centre to advance from Los Arapiles and attack the heights to the south. This they did in spite of a heavy

artillery fire and overwhelmed the French defenders. Owing to the smoke and confusion and the keenness of the men, Pakenham's leading Brigade got too far ahead and some of the 5th Division got mixed up with it and for a short time the situation gave cause for anxiety. But now Le Marchant's Heavy Brigades suddenly appeared with Cotton at their head and in a furious charge broke up and dispersed three different bodies of the enemy. In one of these charges the gallant Le Marchant was slain. Our Light Dragoons followed up the success and the French Horse which strove to protect their infantry were driven off the field. Thus it came about that in less than an hour's fighting the whole of Marmont's left (three Divisions) had been put out of action. Marmont himself was wounded as was Bonnet, the next senior officer, and Clausel took command. Wellington's other Divisions had not been so successful, Cole on Leith's left had been checked in his attack by Clausel and Pack's Portuguese had failed to capture the Greater Arapil. Clausel now made a vigorous counter-attack with Sarrut's Division, supported by some of Bonnet's and Férey's Divisions. Matters seemed serious when, first, Clinton with the 6th Division and then the 1st Division came up and the French were obliged to retire. The only remaining French Division intact was Foy's, now engaged with the Light Division. Férey acting under Clausel's orders made a desperate stand with his seven Battalions in line but his troops eventually had to fall back to the edge of the forest and he was struck down by a round shot. The wildest confusion reigned here, the various shattered corps and regiments with their artillery and trains being intermixed. Shortly before sunset Clausel ordered Foy to cover the flank of his retreat, which he did admirably. Wellington with the 1st and Light Divisions followed, but Foy, by his bold handling of his men, made good his escape and retired to Alba de Tormes. Here Wellington had posted Carlos d'España with 3,360 Spaniards and fully reckoned upon him holding the Castle which commanded the bridge

and ford at that point. Sad to relate d'España had without permission left his post and, what was worse, had neglected to report to Wellington that he had done so. Hence the escape of Marmont's scattered army !

As already mentioned the Light Division were little more than spectators of this glorious day for their task in keeping the French right in check was a trivial one. Some time after noon some Companies of Rifles were sent out to relieve the Light troops of the 7th Division which had hitherto been fighting with Foy's *voltigeurs*. It was not until about 5 o'clock in the afternoon that they were ordered up to attack the French right flank and before they could close on their foe, darkness came on and enabled the enemy to make good their escape. How dark it was when the halt was called may be judged from the fact that several officers of the Rifles who were leading their men on met with "accidents" owing to coming into contact with the foe unexpectedly in the dark.¹

Foy kept off the Light Division with a strong rear-guard of light troops, and although our men and Ross's battery engaged this body, they never came up with the main French Division.

Foy writes : "Night alone saved my Division ; without it the enemy would have arrived at Alba de Tormes before the units of our seven routed Divisions got there."²

Marmont reported his losses at Salamanca to be only 6,000 men and nine guns, a statement, as Oman truly says, only equalled in its mendacity by Soult's report of 2,800 casualties at Albuera. It seems tolerably certain that the total French losses on this day were not less than 14,000 killed, wounded and prisoners, not including some 10,000 men missing who dispersed and rejoined later.³

¹ Simmons, p. 242.

² Foy, *Vie Militaire*, p. 176.

³ Oman, vol. v, p. 469, and Appendix xi, in which is an admirable summary of the strength and losses of Marmont's army at Salamanca based on the *Archives of the Ministry of War in Paris*.

Wellington in his despatch reported 7,000 prisoners. The British losses were 28 officers and 360 other ranks killed and 176 officers and 2,491 other ranks wounded, a grand total, including about 70 men missing, of 3,129. The Portuguese lost about 2,000 and d'España's Spaniards two killed and four wounded.

The Light Division had only one officer and twenty-seven men wounded of whom seven belonged to the Rifles.

Salamanca was one of Wellington's most splendid victories and has been well described as "the battle where he beat about 40,000 Frenchmen in forty minutes." It changed all the prospects of the war, relieved Southern Spain and its effects were felt even as far as Russia. In fact, unlike so many battles, it produced results of great and permanent consequences.¹

¹ Croker, vol. ii, p. 235.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OCCUPATION OF MADRID AND RETREAT TO THE
PORTUGUESE FRONTIER, 1812.

The retreat of the French after Salamanca—The Light Division in pursuit—Cavalry action at Garcia Hernandez—The Division reaches Olmedo—General Férey's grave—Vindictive behaviour of the Spaniards—The Rifle officers re-inter Férey's body—King Joseph advances from Madrid but hearing of Wellington's victory, falls back—The Light Division drives Clausel northward across the Douro—It crosses the Guadarrama Mountains—The British Army enters Madrid—A shortage of pay—Impecuniosity of the Rifle officers—The Light Division forms part of the Madrid garrison—Soult's troubles in Andalucia—He raises the blockade of Cadiz and retires on Seville—Skerrett advances on Seville—Soult falls back on Cordoba and Granada—British reach Seville—Two Companies of the 95th Rifles attack the bridge—Seville occupied—The Riflemen "mentioned in despatches"—Soult joins King Joseph and Suchet north of Alicante—Hill marches to Aranjuez to cover Madrid—King Joseph advances on Madrid—Soult attacks Hill—Skerrett defends bridge—Cadoux's and Jenkins's Companies sharply engaged and highly commended—Wellington marches north and attacks Burgos—Failure of repeated assaults—Souham advances with large force to raise the siege—Hill obliged to retire before King Joseph—Wellington raises siege of Burgos and falls back on Madrid—Hill leaves Madrid—He joins Wellington near Salamanca—King Joseph's armies reach the Tormes—Soult crosses the river—Wellington takes up a new position—The Retreat on Portugal—Hardships and starvation—Combat near San Munoz—Wellington reaches Ciudad Rodrigo—Winter Quarters on the Azava—Wellington's severe Circular on conduct of the retreat—Justifiable resentment of the Light Division—Spanish recruits—Issue of tents—The *tente d'abri*—Issue of light camp kettles—A suggestion of Craufurd's—The Riflemen get a refit—New "Green Jackets"—Regimental transport—British reinforcements—Life in winter quarters—An officers' mess—Private Theatricals—Letter from Charles Beckwith to William Napier—Strength of the Battalions and Depôts of the Rifles during 1812—A Light Division Playbill.

AS we have seen, the Light Division owing to the disobedience of Carlos d'España had the mortification of being unable to carry out Wellington's plan of dealing the French a crushing blow when they retreated across the Tormes after their severe defeat at Salamanca.

See Map
XXV, p. 432.

If however our Riflemen were thus deprived of what they always considered to be their share, in other words a leading share of the great battle, they had the satisfaction on the following day of giving the fleeing enemy a parting shot. At dawn on the 23rd they left their bivouacs opposite to Huerta at the spot where Marmont in their opinion *ought* to have tried to cross, and fording the river pushed southward at full speed. They were preceded by Bock's and Anson's cavalry. The horsemen cut in on to the line of the French retreat at Garcia Hernandez, a village about four miles north-east of Alba de Tormes. Here was posted the rear-guard of French cavalry with several infantry battalions and a horse artillery battery. Anson's cavalry and some of the German squadrons drove off the French horse but a third German squadron, spying the infantry, rode at the nearest of them and although it received three volleys which killed and wounded many men and horses, it broke into the square and practically destroyed it, not more than fifty men escaping death or capture. Another squadron now charged the other French body and, catching it in column, rode into it. A third charge against another of Foy's regiments, the 69th, was less successful and the French withdrew with little further loss. This charge of the German Heavy Dragoons at Garcia Hernandez is a classic among cavalymen and is one of the very few examples of cavalry breaking a properly formed square. The explanation on this occasion was that a horse, shot dead, sprang into the square and thus created a gap through which the Germans poured.

The Light Division arrived on the scene just too late. "The business was most effectually done just as we arrived" writes Simmons, adding "A great number of Germans and their horses were dead close to the square." Kincaid who was also in the pursuit and who came up just after the charge says "This was one of the most gallant charges recorded in history. I saw there fine fellows lying dead along with their horses, on which they still sat astride, with the sword firmly grasped

in the hand as they had fought an instant before, and several of them still wearing a look of fierce defiance which death itself had been unable to quench." The Light Division pressed on and soon came upon the French rear-guard with artillery in position on some high ground near a village. Wellington, who happened to be riding with the Regiment, gave immediate orders for an attack but before this could be carried out the French broke up and vacated their position. So expeditious were the remains of Marmont's force in their retreat that they completely out-distanced their pursuers. A few miles beyond, the cavalry brigade from the "Army of the North" joined Marmont and took over the rear-guard duties. Our cavalry appear to have not been very enterprising according to a cavalry officer present who was well-qualified to speak.¹

Wellington now decided to give his wearied infantry a rest. The Light Division on the 24th passed through Peñaranda and, halting at Flores de Avila, rested there the next day. On the 25th it reached Aldea Seca, on the 27th Montijo Viejo and on the 28th Pedrajo del Portillo. On the 29th it was at Olmedo. Near this town our officers were shown the grave of General Férey who had died of wounds received at Salamanca in his heroic attempt to cover Marmont's retreat. The French had left a canopy of laurels over his grave but some miserable Spaniards had, after their departure, dug up the body and severed the head. It will be recalled how Férey was the leader of the brigade which made the famous attack on the bridge of Barba del Puerco in March 1810. It was a curious chance that his remains should now fall into the hands of his ancient foes, the Rifles. Simmons writes he had "a noble head with a fine expressive countenance and a pair of big moustaches." And Leach says the body was of "an amazingly athletic man, apparently of the middle age." The Rifle officers caused

See Map
"Spain and
Portugal,"
at end of
volume.

¹ Tomkinson, p. 191.

the body to be interred and the laurel canopy renewed and exacted a promise from the inhabitants to leave it untouched.

On 30 July the Light Division forded the Douro and encamped on the right bank about six miles from Valladolid. Here it halted for a day. Ever since 16 July it had been marching or fighting and now at last there came a chance for the men to bathe and wash their clothes, which after the heat and dust of the last two weeks was a perfect godsend.

King Joseph and Jourdan had left Madrid on 21 July with the 14,000 men they had gathered together and on the morning of the 24th when at Blasco Sancho, about sixty miles from Madrid and the same distance from Salamanca, he received news of Marmont's defeat. Clausel wrote to the King that it was useless for him to join him as their combined forces would not be able to resist the victorious Wellington, adding that if the latter pursued him he would have to retire on Burgos. The King at once decided to return to Madrid. Wellington, hearing of this, determined to continue on Clausel's trail and marched, as we have seen, to Olmedo on the 28th. Clausel crossed the Douro on that day by the bridge near Tudela and entered Valladolid. On the 29th the Light Division and 1st Division drove Clausel's outposts covering the bridges across the Douro and Clausel destroyed them. The British cavalry forded the Douro and the French thereupon left Valladolid which was re-occupied by the Allies.

Wellington having ordered the Light Division to repair the bridges at Tudela, during the early days of August, collected his Divisions near Cuellar about midway between Valladolid and Segovia, whither Joseph had marched instead of returning to Madrid. Clausel he had no fear about, but Soult and Suchet he reasonably thought might advance against him from the south. Hence his uncertainty, for his only possible reinforcement was Hill with his 18,000 men. Fortunately Suchet was too much occupied with a threatened attack by the Sicilian Army under Lord W. Bentinck on Valencia and Tarragona and still more fortunately

Soult, in place of obeying Joseph's orders and marching to assist him, declined to move. So Wellington decided that he could not do better than march on Madrid and turn King Joseph out of it, leaving Clinton with the 6th Division and some details, altogether about 7,000 men, and Anson's cavalry to watch Clausel on the Douro.

On 7 August Wellington's van-guard entered Segovia and marched to the Escorial two days later. Joseph's rear-guard was at Las Rozas five miles north of Madrid. In Madrid wild confusion reigned and King Joseph, leaving a small garrison to hold El Retiro and man the fortified enceinte around it, left for Aranjuez on the 10th. Wellington entered Madrid the following day; on the night of the 13th the enceinte was stormed by small detachments and on the 14th the French Commander of El Retiro surrendered.

During the march to Madrid the advance-guard duties had been carried out by D'Urban's Portuguese cavalry, the German Heavies and the Light Battalion of the German Legion. This force got into serious trouble with a strong force of French cavalry on the 11th when near Madrid and lost heavily.

The Light Division marched in rear of the allied Army, it was extremely weak at this time owing to the losses at Rodrigo and Badajoz. Moving by a branch-road from Cuellar on the 6th, it bivouacked on the 8th in a wood near the River Eresma and on the 9th in the immense pine forest near the Palacio del Rio Frio. On the 11th it passed through the defile known as the Puerto de Guadarrama and bivouacked in the park of the Escorial. Whilst the men were taking off their knapsacks two wild boars were started from a thicket. So much alarmed were the brutes that they ran amongst the men, knocking over several of them and receiving many cuts and stabs from sword and bayonet until they succumbed, when they were immediately cut up and their carcasses distributed.

On the 12th the Light Division entered Madrid. Here the inhabitants welcomed the British soldiers with the most extravagant

joy and every sort of amusement and entertainment was provided for them, including of course a particularly splendid bull-fight in honour of Wellington. Unfortunately for some months past there had been no money to pay our troops and it is pathetic to read in various officers' journals to what desperate straits they were put to obtain a few shillings. Kincaid notes mournfully that "as nobody could, would or should give cash for bills, we were obliged to sell our silver spoons, watches and everything of value we stood possessed of, to purchase the common necessities of life."

We must now see what had been happening in Andalucia whilst the campaign of Salamanca was in progress. Ballesteros had once again emerged from his favourite refuge under the guns of Gibraltar and recommenced his raids through the Serrania of Ronda but he was very severely handled by Conroux near Bornos on 1 June and fell back to the Rock. Nothing daunted, six weeks later he again sallied forth with 6,000 men and captured Malaga. Soult at once directed columns from Granada and Cadiz to cut him off but Ballesteros slipped through the Serrania and eventually regained his old lair at Gibraltar. During this time Hill in Estremadura had been engaged in a series of movements against d'Erlon which, like those of Ballesteros, served to occupy a very considerable number of French troops.

The victory of Salamanca entirely altered the state of affairs in Andalucia and King Joseph ordered its immediate evacuation, but Soult, as we have seen, resisted this and it was not until 12 August that, realizing that the game was up, he at last decided to withdraw. Much however had to be done in the way of removing or destroying guns and stores and it was not until the 24th that the blockade of Cadiz was finally raised and Soult marched on Seville. Two days later d'Erlon withdrew from Estremadura and marched on Cordoba.

Wellington had written to General Cooke in command of Cadiz to fall upon the French when they retired. General Cruz Murgeon with

4,000 Spanish had landed at Huelva and him Cooke reinforced with some companies of the Guards and 87th and Cadoux's and Jenkins's two Companies of the 2nd Battalion of the Rifles as well as some details, altogether 1,600 men. These were placed under Skerrett and the combined force marched on Seville whither Soult had gone. The French outposts at San Lucar la Mayor were attacked and driven in on August 24. Soult hearing of the approach of the Allies abandoned Seville during the night of the 26th, taking with him an immense quantity of booty. The small allied force was marching up the right (or northern) bank of the Guadalquivir and at 6 o'clock on the morning of the 27th arrived at Castelleja de la Cuesta opposite to Seville. Skerrett made an attack on the bridge which had been barricaded. The advance-guard formed of the two Companies of Riflemen under the command of Cadoux were met as they neared the river with a heavy fire of grape-shot and musketry. Cadoux taking advantage of some favourable ground on his left brought a rifle fire to bear which drove the defenders back from the bridge which was then rushed by some of the Guards after the Estremaduran Legion had been twice beaten back. The troops crossed, the garrison was driven out and the city occupied. There was some street fighting, but the French soon withdrew, leaving two guns, 200 prisoners and a lot of booty which fell into the hands of the victors. There was no pursuit.

Skerrett in his despatches particularly mentioned the conduct of the 95th Rifles on this occasion and eulogized the "great judgment" of Captain Cadoux.¹

On 16 August when Wellington's despatches announcing the victory of Salamanca were received in London, he was advanced to a Marquisate. It will be recalled that he had been granted an Earldom in the preceding February.

¹ *Supp. Desp.*, vol. xiv, pp. 108-11.

History of the Rifle Brigade

Soult when he left Seville marched to Granada where he picked up Leval and sundry garrisons and thence to Huescar. Here he was joined by d'Erlon who had marched from Cordoba by Jaen. Soult had now 45,000 men under him and was secure from any attack and made preparations to join Suchet.

Meanwhile during the month of July Suchet (who had previously been much occupied with plundering the city of Valencia), having detached Harispe to keep watch on O'Donnell's Spaniards at Alicante, had gone north to Catalonia, and O'Donnell took advantage of his absence to attack Harispe and on 20 July received a severe beating.

On 8 August Lord W. Bentinck's expedition from Sicily under General Maitland, after a series of delays, landed at Alicante; and as it numbered some 14,000 men, Suchet deemed it best to draw in Harispe and to concentrate his forces in Murcia. On 25 August King Joseph joined hands with him at Almanza, fifty miles north of Alicante, and here the two waited for Soult who arrived there on 2 October.

One result of Soult's withdrawal from Andalucia and d'Erlon's consequent retreat from Estremadura was that Hill, being no longer wanted there, had been ordered by Wellington to march by Almaraz to Toledo so as to cover Madrid on the south. Early in October Skerrett marching by Trujillo with about 4,500 men, joined him at Toledo. During October King Joseph with Soult's and d'Erlon's troops (but not Suchet's who had insisted on remaining in Valencia) advanced on Madrid.

Hill now took post on the Upper Tagus and watched a line from Aranjuez to Fuentedueña about twenty-five miles to the east, but finding the river was fordable he fell back a few miles nearer to Madrid and took up a better line on the Jarama river at Puente Larga. On 29 October Soult attacked Cole's Division at Puente Larga; the bridge was held by Skerrett with the 2nd Battalion 47th Regiment and the two Companies of the 2nd Battalion of the Rifles under Cadoux and

Jenkins. The bridge had been mined but the charge failed to explode and Soult who had crossed the Tagus at Aranjuez and collected a considerable force in front of Puente Larga, made a furious attack on it. The defence of the bridge fell entirely on Skerrett's small force and the French were "repulsed with considerable loss." According to Jourdan's despatch the British succeeded in blowing up two spans of the bridge before retreating.¹ Hill retreated north the same night. Wellington in his despatches says : " Lieutenant-General Sir Rowland Hill speaks in high terms of the conduct of the troops."² The losses of the two Companies of Riflemen in this gallant affair were one Sergeant and two Riflemen killed and one officer, Lieutenant John Robert Budgen, and eight Riflemen wounded.

We return now to our Army at Madrid ; on 14 August Clausel had reoccupied Valladolid and Wellington decided to march northward and deal with him, apparently reckoning upon being able to return to Madrid before King Joseph, Soult and Suchet could combine to attack him. So leaving the Light Division, together with Victor Alten's cavalry, at Madrid and the 4th Division at the Escorial (about 7,000 all told) he took with him the 1st, 5th and 7th Divisions, some Portuguese and cavalry, altogether about 24,000 men and started northward on 31 August. His immediate objective was Burgos, which had been made the principal depot of the " Army of Portugal " and which barred the route northward towards France.

The French Commander at Burgos, Dubreton, had thrown up earth-works outside of the ancient walls and generally strengthened the place. His artillery consisted of only nine big guns, eleven field-guns and six mortars and, in addition to his artillerymen, he had 1,800 good infantrymen. Wellington on reaching Burgos on 18 September disposed the

¹ Fortescue, vol. viii, p. 606, note.

² *Well. Desp.* To Earl Bathurst, 3 November, 1812.

bulk of his troops as a covering force and invested the Castle with the remainder. He had no proper siege-train with him, only three 18-pounder guns, five 24-pounder howitzers and six mortars with very little ammunition and few intrenching tools. Wellington entered the city of Burgos on the 18th and next day a horn-work was captured and the siege began. On the 22nd our guns opened on the place and on the same night an escalade was attempted which failed completely with considerable loss to the attackers. Saps were pushed forward but heavy rains made all digging difficult. On 27 September an assault was attempted from the advance saps but this also failed. Some guns were however brought up and the walls partially breached. On 2 October another attack was launched and lodgements were effected in the breaches. Three days later the French made a vigorous sortie and destroyed the lodgements. On 18 October another assault (the fifth) was made but for want of support the attackers were once again driven back.

But whilst the siege of Burgos had been in progress much had happened. On 3 October General Souham, who had succeeded Marmont in command of the various Divisions on the Ebro, arrived from France with some reinforcements. Napoleon had first offered the command to Masséna but the latter for reasons of health, it is said, declined it. Possibly the heavy handling he had received from the Light Division during his retreat of the previous year may have been not entirely unconnected with his reasons.

Souham who had been joined by Caffarelli now had some 53,000 men at his disposal whereas Wellington's reduced Divisions only numbered 21,000 British troops with 12,000 Spaniards of very doubtful value. Wellington had reckoned on Hill being reinforced by Ballesteros on the Upper Tagus, but the Spanish General, who had followed after Soult when he retreated from Seville, now declined to obey Wellington's orders ! His reasons were typically Spanish and are a good example

of the extraordinary difficulties which constantly beset Wellington on every side. On 22 September the Cortes had passed a decree giving Wellington supreme command of the Spanish forces. Ballesteros pronounced this to be an insult to the Spanish Army and remained halted at Granada ! He was eventually superseded, but the result of his action was that Hill was left to face alone King Joseph's combined armies numbering 60,000 men and eighty-four guns with the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and Light Divisions ; these, with Skerrett's column and some Spanish regulars, only amounted to 40,000 men. It was the knowledge of this advance of King Joseph, combined with the near approach of the strong relieving force under Souham which compelled Wellington on the night of 21 October, bitterly against his will, to raise the siege of Burgos and retire on Madrid. It was a sad and disappointing ending to a most brilliant campaign. Happily the results of the victory of Salamanca, although thus temporarily postponed, were destined to bear fruit.

Having thus brought together in some degree the various movements of the widely scattered French forces, we will return to the Light Division which we left cantoned at Getafe near Madrid whence, whenever the officers could raise a little money, they made expeditions to the capital. On 25 October, when it became known that King Joseph was advancing on Madrid, the Light Division marched to Alcala de las Henares about twenty miles east of the capital. On the 27th it marched to Arganda about thirteen miles south-west but no sooner had the men settled into their billets for the night than the order was given for the Division to return to Alcala at once. This it did and in consequence was marching and counter-marching for twenty-four hours. On the 30th it retired on Madrid and halted near El Pardo. It now became known that the Allies were going to withdraw from Madrid and fall back on Salamanca. The indignation and contempt of the inhabitants at being thus, as they considered, abandoned to their hated foes by the

hitherto victorious Army of the Allies was great. On the 30th the retreat commenced. On the night of 2 November the Light Division bivouacked in the park of the Escorial and on the following day the Sierra de Guadarrama was crossed and the Army halted at Villacastin. General Hill took command having marched up from the Jarama. The two Companies of Riflemen with him (Cadoux's and Jenkins's) now rejoined the 2nd Battalion, from which they had been separated ever since March 1810, when they had left it at Hythe soon after their return from the Walcheren Expedition.

The retreat was continued. On the 5th Fuente de Baños was reached. On the 7th the Light Division was near Alba de Tormes and the following day crossed the Tormes by a bridge and bivouacked in a wood near Calvarassa de Arriba. Next day Hill's force joined the Divisions retreating from Burgos under Wellington and on the 10th the combined army of the Allies was in position astride the Tormes with its right on Alba and its left on the heights of San Cristobal north of Salamanca. On the night of the 10th the 7th and Light Divisions occupied quarters in Salamanca, the Light Division being put into the Irish College. On the night of the 13th a sad accident befell an officer of the 3rd Battalion, Lieutenant Firmin. Going his rounds as orderly officer to see "lights out" at 8 p.m. he slipped and fell through the broken balustrade of a stone staircase and was "almost dashed to pieces" on the flagged pavement below.

Wellington had now about 52,000 British and Portuguese and 16,000 Spaniards and 108 guns, but his cavalry was only 3,500 strong.

See Map
XXV, p. 432.

As to the French Armies, on 1 November Soult with the "Army of the South" reached Madrid and on the 10th arrived at Alba de Tormes. King Joseph with the "Army of the Centre" on this day was fifteen miles east of him at Macotera and Souham with the bulk of the "Army of Portugal" was at Huerta and Babila Fuente. The total French force was about 80,000 infantry with over 10,000 cavalry and 120 guns.

When Soult reached Alba de Tormes he brought up eighteen guns and fired heavily on Howard's Brigade which was posted to defend the passage of the river at that point. Next day King Joseph with Soult, Souham and other Generals reconnoitred Wellington's position and a difference of opinion arose as to the best way to attack it. Soult eventually got his views accepted and the King thereupon added "The Army of the Centre" to his command, giving d'Erlon command of the "Army of Portugal." After two days spent in preparations, on the 14th Soult crossed the Tormes a few miles south of Alba and occupied Mozarvez, a village two miles south of Arapiles. Wellington upon hearing of Soult's crossing, left the 4th Division and his cavalry before Alba and the 3rd Division in reserve at Arapiles and advanced with the intention of driving Soult back across the river but soon found he was in presence of a strong force. Soult now sent on three cavalry divisions and Wellington deployed his force and, opening fire with two batteries, checked their advance but it was clear to Wellington that his right flank had been turned. In consequence that night he withdrew his Divisions from the north of the Tormes and blew up the bridge at Alba. By daylight he had taken up a new position facing south-east with his right on Aldea Tejada and left near Calvarrasa de Arriba. Meanwhile d'Erlon had effected a crossing a little north of Alba. During the night a terrific storm came on with sheets of rain and the country became almost impassable. On the 15th Soult did not attempt to attack although Wellington remained halted. Finally at 2 p.m. Wellington, who had already sent off his baggage and sick, seeing that there was no prospect of Soult attacking, ordered a retreat and fell back to the west in three columns and crossed the Valmuza stream.

The weather was terrible ; furious rain-storms accompanied by high winds set in, and the whole country was flooded and the mud knee-deep in places. The Light Division, as usual, was on rear-guard and

although the whole Army underwent great privations during the retreat, the Division had an exceptionally hard time of it, since from its position it had to be first under arms of a morning and it was the last, of course, to reach the bivouacs at night, generally long after dark. No rations were obtainable and the starving men searched for bullocks which had fallen and died when yoked to the baggage carts. From these they cut off with their swords "a delightful repast, grilled, half-smoked and half-roasted" and naturally "as tough as a shoe-sole." Others groped about on their hands and knees in the woods and picked up the acorns which had fallen from the ilex and cork trees which, although bitter, to some extent appeased their hunger.

On the 16th the retreat continued under similar trying conditions; many of the men lost their shoes in the tenacious mud. The French cavalry throughout the day hovered close behind the retiring Riflemen but did not venture to attack. On the 17th the rain was again torrential and at dawn the French pressed forward; two Companies of Riflemen extended in skirmishing order on either side of the road on some commanding ground and all hands were keen to fight. The enemy were however very superior in force and they were soon ordered to retire. As they did so, they passed Wellington who called out to them "Be cool! my lads; don't be in a hurry!" The French now were close upon them and the Riflemen as well as the Commander-in-Chief were obliged to retire. At this moment the sharp crack of rifles was heard in *rear* of our men and for a moment it seemed as if they had been cut off. It transpired that some French dragoons under cover of the woods had worked round the flank of the Light Division and made a dash at the baggage. The officer of the baggage-guard, Lieutenant Cameron, was captured but the next moment the retiring troops of the Light Division coming into view, the dragoons dropped their prey and galloped off to the tune of the rifles of the baggage-guard, whose reports had so surprised our men. The same daring

French horsemen later on made a similar dash into the interval between the 5th and 7th Divisions and took the gallant Sir Edward Paget prisoner.

COMBAT OF SAN MUNOZ ON THE HUEBRA, 17 OCTOBER.

The retreat this day was most trying, many of the soldiers were left behind and fell into the hands of the French and several died of exhaustion. The route was strewn with carcasses of every description, horses, mules, donkeys and bullocks with abandoned baggage-carts stuck in the deep slough. Soon after noon the rear-guard reached the edge of the table-land they had been crossing, whence the ground fell in a long open slope to a ford on the Huebra river near the village of San Munoz. No sooner had our rear-guard quitted the crest of the high ground than the French advanced and seized it and opened a severe fire of cannon as well as of musketry from the adjacent woods on the retiring Division, whilst the cavalry threatened both flanks. The retirement down hill was covered by some Companies of the Rifles as well as some of the 43rd and 52nd acting as skirmishers, thus keeping off the enemy's light troops which pressed on the rear-guard. "It is impossible to conceive anything more steady and regular than the march of the Light Division from the heights to the river and across it although the whole time under a heavy cannonade. No troops in a field-day ever preserved their formation in better order." So wrote Leach in his journal who, whilst admitting that such a statement may come badly from one who belonged to the Division, adds "I am not at all alarmed that anybody who was an eye-witness *can* contradict me."

As each unit of the Division reached the river bank, the men plunged into the foaming stream which was running fast and waist-deep. Whilst crossing they came under a sharp fire both of shot and shell and several officers and men were killed. It is said that Soult personally directed the movements of the advance-guard and before the last of the

Riflemen had gained the opposite bank some French light troops, said to be a brigade of Swiss, tried to cross the river below and so turn the left of the British rear-guard. Some Companies of the Rifles however which had already crossed sharply opposed them and they were "put back handsomely" by the 52nd who were posted at this point, so that not a Frenchman got across. Strong piquets were now posted all along the river-bank and the 7th Division was in position along the heights behind. The Light Division bivouacked amid the cork trees on the steep bank of the river in miserable weather. Some time after dark the Commissary managed to provide some bullocks which were soon killed and cut up and officers and men alike attempted to roast bits of flesh spitted on sharp sticks or on their swords, but the violent gusts of wind shook the raindrops from the heavy foliage and it was found almost impossible to keep the fires burning, still less to cook and all hands set about "making themselves comfortable" in their drenched clothes for the remainder of the night. It had been intended that the other Divisions should continue the retreat during the night, but the men were so fatigued and the roads were so bad that the last of the Divisions only moved off shortly before dawn; by that time the Riflemen were already standing to their arms ready for another day's work.

When day broke a thick haze hung over the river and an attack was momentarily expected, a serious matter considering how close were our retreating Divisions to the rear-guard. Presently the sun broke through the mist and soon after it was found that the French, who had suffered equally from starvation and the terrible weather during the preceding few days, had abandoned the pursuit and were in full retreat on Salamanca. Thus it was that the British force continued on its way unmolested. A curious additional discomfort experienced during this retreat was caused by innumerable stumps of small trees which, being hidden by the deep mud, caused the men to strike them with

their feet, a most painful business aggravated by the fact that the men's feet from marching for days through water and slush were extremely tender. Many of the men were marching barefooted and Simmons notes mournfully that his own boots as well as those of several of the other officers "had no bottoms" and that many suffered from frost-bite of the legs and feet. Again on this day no provisions were forthcoming and Leach's ration consisted of some acorns and a glass of rum. "The only enemies we had to encounter were hunger, fatigue, rain, sleet and snow." At nightfall they bivouacked near Santi Espiritus and on the following day they reached the Agueda and at noon halted close to Ciudad Rodrigo. Here after four days' starvation, food was obtained, bags of biscuits having been sent out. So ravenous indeed were the men that a rush was made on the biscuits and "the officers had difficulty in driving them back into the ranks, so as to permit of a regular issue being made to every man" and it was necessary to post a guard with fixed bayonets around the piles of biscuits. It is pleasant to read that the poor fellows after eating their biscuit voraciously were able to wash it down with an allowance of rum and that soon everything appeared all right again.¹ Now, for the first time for over a week were officers and men able to change their clothes and get a wash. Many suffered from swollen feet and so hard had their boots become that they had literally to be cut off their feet.²

The losses of the Regiment during the retreat were, 1st Battalion, one Sergeant and one Rifleman killed and five wounded, 2nd Battalion, one Rifleman killed and five wounded, with one bugler and eight rank and file missing, 3rd Battalion, one Rifleman wounded and nine missing ;

¹ Leach, *MS. Journal*, No. 2.

² That the complaints about the want of boots were genuine is proved by the fact that Wellington in a General Order of 30 November ordered that every N.C.O. and soldier who was present with their Regiments in Spain between 15 and 19 November should "receive a pair of shoes *gratis*" from the Commissary. A very unusual concession.—*Supp. Desp.*, vol. vii, pp. 480.

a total of 33 casualties. The bulk of the missing were men who had been too badly wounded or were too much exhausted to attempt to cross the river in the fight on the Huebra on the 17th.

On the 25th the Division marched to Villa del Puerco and adjacent villages. On this day it received a reinforcement in the shape of the 17th Portuguese Infantry which is described as "a fine corps, in good order and commanded by an Englishman, Colonel Rolt." It was posted to the 1st Brigade.

On November 30 the Light Division was once more back in its old winter quarters, with the 1st Battalion at Alameda, the 2nd Battalion at Espeja and the 3rd, with the 43rd, at Gallegos. After going into winter-quarters there was a great deal of sickness among the men, the inevitable result of the exposure, hardships and starvation they had undergone. In the 1st Battalion records particular mention is made of "the indefatigable exertions of Surgeon Burke" at this time. Many of the men and some officers suffered from a numbness of the limbs and extremities which was rather cruelly set down to their having "done themselves too well" after their prolonged hardships !

It was whilst the Light Division was in winter-quarters that Wellington issued his famous Circular to Officers Commanding Divisions and Brigades censuring the neglect of duty of the officers and the bad conduct of the men during the recent retreat. This Circular caused the greatest dissatisfaction in the Light Division who, as in the case of Moore's retreat on Coruña, had kept its discipline and had notoriously carried out the rear-guard duties admirably. Wellington's sweeping censure is now known to have been largely caused by his just annoyance at the misconduct and indeed disobedience of some of his General Officers who, on more than one occasion, nearly brought about a disaster.¹

¹*Supp. Despatches*, vol. vii, p. 492. Letter to Colonel Torrens on "Inefficient General Officers" and asking for the recall of some. In the "Croker Correspondence," vol. ii,

Both Leach and Kincaid, alike devoted admirers of Wellington, allude at length to this unfortunate Circular. I cannot do better than give Sir William Cope's account of this most regrettable affair.

"That many irregularities took place, and much duty was neglected in some Divisions and corps, may be as freely admitted, as that Armies become disorganized in retreats. But in the Light Division Craufurd's strict orders were still observed. 'Being dead he yet spoke.' In the Regiment Manningham and Stewart's Standing Orders so strictly defining the duties of Company officers were still observed; and Beckwith's and Barnard's admirable system prevailed; and among them no such irregularities took place. The Circular also stated that the Army had 'suffered no privations which but trifling attention on the part of the officers could not have prevented,' and had 'not suffered any hardships but those resulting from the inclemencies of the weather.' Yet anyone who reads the last few pages, compiled from journals of Riflemen who were present, may think the sufferings of the troops were under-estimated by their great leader. Still less did the sweeping accusations of want of discipline and neglect of duty seem deserved. Both Leach and Kincaid state that not a man of the Regiment (nor, as they believe of the Division) was left behind, except those too badly wounded at San Munoz, or too utterly exhausted and moribund from hunger or fatigue, to be brought over the Huebra. Had the great Commander, like Moore, exempted from censure those who deserved praise he would not have wounded the feelings and the *esprit de corps* of the men who had so bravely fought and suffered, and were yet to fight and suffer, under his eye and at his side."

During the winter of 1812-13 a certain number of Spanish recruits joined the Army and about eight were posted to each Company of the

p. 309, the Duke gives details of one of these acts of disobedience, adding "these sort of things obliged me to say and do things which to bystanders and critics may seem hard."

1st Battalion. The Spanish Government had, so far back as May 1812, approved of 5,000 men being thus enlisted in the British Army for the duration of the war for service in the Peninsula, and Wellington had issued orders accordingly. Among others, Surtees had been sent out recruiting but met with small success and it was not until the Light Division was in Madrid after the victory of Salamanca that men came forward. "They made excellent Riflemen and were distinguished for their bravery, often degenerating into ferocity, prompted by revenge for the injuries they and their families had suffered from the French. Some of them were made Corporals."¹

During the time spent in winter quarters Wellington, as may be imagined, was fully occupied in refitting and equipping his Army for the tremendous task in front of him. For the first time in the Peninsular War regular tents were provided, the allowance to the 95th being three per Company for N.C.O.s and Riflemen with one for the officers of each Company. Since the Companies averaged about seventy strong this meant over twenty men to a tent. The new tents were ordered to be pitched behind rising ground out of sight of the enemy although it was permissible to move them up to any position *after dark* so as to be of greater comfort to the troops holding the ground. During the Campaign of 1812 tents had been extemporized by making the men sew loops to the covers of their blankets. Two blankets were looped together and stands of rifles were used at either end to act as tent poles. Four men used one of these *tentes d'abri*, the two remaining blankets being used to wrap themselves in. This was of course a disadvantage, still in many cases they afforded some sort of shelter from wind, rain and sun, although of a very indifferent nature.

Many carts of a new pattern were provided and a large number of mules bought. The mules carried the tents and their loads were

¹ Cope, p. 129. Upon the Light Division entering France at the end of the year 1813 these Spaniards were all discharged.

COUNTRY NEAR SALAMANGA

COUNTRY NEAR SALAMANCA

lightened by the substitution of light tin camp kettles, which could be carried by the men, in place of the heavy iron ones which had hitherto been considered necessary for our Armies in the field. This last change was a triumph for the Light Division and its old leader, who so far back as September 1809 had urged on Wellington the great advantage of having light camp kettles which could be carried by the men in place of the ponderous iron ones which required mule transport. To this Wellington had replied "In a Regiment well looked after, it is certain that tin kettles would answer best, as the officers would oblige the men to look after them—but in two-thirds of the Regiments of this Army such care would not be taken, and whether the Regiment would have kettles or not would depend upon that most thoughtless of all animals, the soldier himself, and I should very soon hear that there were none.¹

Thus was it that over three years after Craufurd's urgent representations and a full year after his death, not only the Light Division but the whole Army got the benefit of his conception of making our infantry more independent of their transport.

As regards the Riflemen, new clothing was got up from Abrantes on the Tagus—not before it was wanted, for the men's uniforms were "in shreds and patches." The officers were fortunate enough to get hold of some green cloth in Lisbon and this the Regimental tailors soon made into jackets and trousers, and before long, officers and men were at any rate adequately clothed.

Other very important articles of equipment which had to be repaired and renovated were the pack-saddles and all the appliances which are essential for pack-animal transport in a roadless country like Spain. A supply of spare horse-shoes, nails, etc., had also to be provided and there were always some Riflemen who had experience as shoeing smiths. The animals themselves, both riding horses and

¹ *Well. Desp.* To Craufurd, Badajos, 29 Sept. 1809.

baggage, which had survived the hardships and starvation of the autumn retreat and the short commons of the winter months, as spring came on and the grass grew, soon recovered themselves and were ready to take the field once again. The main wants of the Company officers seem to have been tea and sugar, pigskins of wine, kegs of spirits and of course "lots of segars."

Leach in his Diary gives many details of the new organization of the Army for the coming Campaign and more especially that of the Light Division showing the number of Companies of our Riflemen with each of its Brigades. He adds, "The rifle Battalion of the 60th Regiment, who are all Germans, have been long since broken up as a Battalion and their Companies distributed, one to each Division of the Army. In the Light Division we have not any of the 60th attached to us. The Duke of Brunswick's Light Infantry Regiment has, like the 60th, been broken up and distributed to different Divisions of the Army except the Light Division. We have none of them."

Leach proceeds to recount the reinforcements which Wellington had received during the winter, some 6,000, including the three regiments of Household Cavalry and a Hussar Brigade, and to make some caustic remarks on the fact that Wellington's Army had already been through five campaigns and served four years and four months in the Peninsula (1809-1813) whilst "these gentlemen have been campaigning in London, at Brighton, Hampton Court and Weymouth."

The officers of the 1st Battalion on their arrival at Alameda realizing that they were probably likely to be left in peace for some time set about establishing a Mess. Leach has left a capital account of how it was created and organized. An old barn was selected and two chimneys were punched through the roof and huge fireplaces built below them. In these they heaped up big fires of Spanish oak. A general levy was made on all the knives, forks and plates, etc., of each Company's Mess, and all hands worked to make the place comfortable. The uni-

forms were admittedly "rather tarnished," but as the "delicate complexions" of the officers were the same, nobody minded. "A more ruffian-like class of fellows" it would have been hard to meet. Everybody had to learn to sing a song and the nights were spent "in harmony and conviviality."

The Commander of the Light Division, Baron Charles Alten, established his Headquarters at Alameda and frequently gave dinner parties and seems to have been much liked. Nothing would satisfy the officers of the Light Division but to get up some private theatricals. The difficulties were appalling for no possible house existed at or anywhere near Alameda for such a purpose. At last on 2 January 1813 a small (disused) chapel at Gallegos, ten miles distant, was loaned with the approval of the inhabitants and the play of "The Rivals" was duly staged. Of course, scenery, dresses and all else had to be improvised from what could be collected in this wild mountainous country, far from any town save what was left of Rodrigo. The principal parts were taken by three of the 43rd Light Infantry and three of the Rifle officers; Lieutenant Gore, 43rd, and Lord Charles Spencer, 95th, taking the ladies' parts and being voted "by no means badly dressed" and as "passable for fine handsome women" in fact, "regular *guapas*"¹ although some criticized the habit of these fair damsels

¹ The playbill is given at the end of the chapter on p. 441.

"*Que guapa!*" What a beauty! In Spain a fine handsome woman of commanding figure is commonly described as "guapa." This word was readily picked up by the British soldier and was naturally enough pronounced "wapper." In various letters written from the Peninsula during the War I have come across the word spelt correctly and also, as above, phonetically. Thus, one of our Private Riflemen describes how he met near Shorncliffe "one of the finest young women as ever he seed! my eye as we say in Spain if she was not a "*wapper!*"—Kincaid. *Random Shots*, p. 105.

Again in a letter from Harry Smith to his brother-subaltern George Simmons in 1811, he expatiates on the number of "*guapas*" in the particular Spanish town where the Rifles were in winter-quarters. Now "wapper" in English can equally be spelt "whopper" and I venture to suggest that the vulgar British expression of "whopper"

drinking punch and smoking "segars" between the acts. One night early in February Lord Wellington and his Staff rode over from head-quarters at Freneda to see the Light Division Play. At a critical moment one of the actors forgot his part and things looked awkward; when "the Marquis of Wellington rose up and began clapping his hands and crying Bravo!" We learn that "instant confidence was restored and the part was recollected." Wellington "remained till all was over and then galloped back through the worst roads in Europe on a dark night, twelve miles."¹

In addition to the theatricals, the Rifles "usually gave a ball once a week to the ladies of the village." Of these Simmons writes, "These delicate ladies feed so grossly and eat so much garlic that——" I refrain from repeating his ungallant remarks. As regards outdoor sports those who were lucky enough to possess guns shot a few partridges, and there were "trout as large as five pounds" in the clear mountain waters of the Agueda, but good fishing tackle and flies were sadly lacking.

On 30 April George Simmons wrote to his father: "We have been five months in snug winter-quarters without seeing the face of a French Man, a thing which has never happened before."

Unquestionably this life in cantonments must have been terribly dull owing to lack of communications and the scarcity of mails and

as applied to something "fine and large" is derived from the Spanish *guapa* through the intermediary form of "wapper." Skeat's Dictionary gives "whop" also "whap," "wap," and "wop" as "to beat" whilst in the Century Dictionary we get "whop," "to beat or strike"; "whopper" "one who beats" also, "a monstrous lie." But nowhere have I come across the derivation which I here suggest as likely. The word "guapa," "wapper," or "whopper" from meaning a fine and large woman was extended so as to include anything of fine proportions, notably a big fish or a peculiarly audacious falsehood. Absurdly enough in one of the best Standard Spanish Dictionaries we find the word "whopper" rendered as "mentira colosal" i.e., "monstrous lie." Thus has it come about that the word, starting from Spain in 1808—1813 among our soldiers as descriptive of a fine girl has, after the lapse of over a century, returned to the Peninsula with a widely different signification.

¹ Leach. MS. Journal, No. 2.

newspapers in those days. The following letter from Captain Charles Beckwith¹ of the 1st Battalion to Major William Napier of the 43rd, who was in England on account of his wounds, graphically describes the thoughts and feelings of our gallant fellows during these months of waiting for the coming of Spring and with it the renewal of their task of fighting the French.

“ Alameda, Spain,

“ 1 May 1813.

“ My dear Napier,

“ . . . I think we had the pleasure of walking from Salamanca to these parts together, and, I daresay, you will recollect what sort of a walk it was. Rumour says that we are about to retrace our steps and that we shall not stop until we have driven the French out of Spain. In the meantime, according to custom, the French are represented to be very weak and we very strong; it is said that they will never be able to keep together, though they have lived in that state for the last five months and have even been forming magazines during that period behind the Douro, where the Army of Portugal at present is; the Army of the South is in Salamanca, Avila, Segovia and Madrid occupying all the country.

“ It is generally supposed that we shall find 80,000 men behind the Douro. The first operation, I take it for granted, is to get over the river, next to drive them behind the Ebro and then to take Burgos. I know nothing of the strength of our own Army because some people say that it is very strong, and others that it is not so strong, and I have no means of informing myself upon this point, but I think, if what D. W. said last November was true, I have not overstated the enemy's force. . . . However, I am totally in the dark upon all

¹ Afterwards Major-General Charles Beckwith C.B. who lost a leg at Waterloo. After retiring from the Army he lived for many years a life of great usefulness among the Waldenses. He died in 1862.

the points which enable us beings of an inferior description to form any opinion at all.

"We have acted some plays since you left us with various success, we have got drunk with constant success, and I begin to think that the only thing one can be certain of in this life is that you will certainly get drunk if you will but drink enough.

"Our mode of life is exactly the same as when you left us. I ride about all the morning in pursuit of nothing. Barnard smokes segars until the very atmosphere between the Coa and Agueda is impregnated with the 'herbiferous herb' as Dr. Morgan says, and if you were here again you might draw legs and muscles and Thalia's and Melpomene's until your paint, your paper and your patience were exhausted.

"The monotony of the scene is only varied by the reports of Monday which are all found to be lies on Tuesday morning. Sometimes 40,000 Frenchmen march out of the country, sometimes they march in ; sometimes the Spaniards have 150,000 men, sometimes 50 ; sometimes we are to march to France, sometimes to England, sometimes we have plenty to eat and drink, and sometimes we have not. Excepting by this last circumstance, I am altogether unconcerned as to what does or does not occur, very few things give me pleasure, and very few pain. But in the midst of this chequered scene of joy and sorrow, whether in the Palace of Ildefonso, or in the bivouac at San Munoz, in mirth or woe, believe me always

"Yours very sincerely,

"C. BECKWITH."

This letter was addressed to "Major W. Napier at Lady Sarah Napier's, 14, Cadogan Place, Sloane Street," and marked "Twopenny Post Unpaid."

The Occupation of Madrid, 1812

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STRENGTH OF THE BATTALIONS AND DEPOTS DURING 1812.

During the year 1812 the 1st Battalion had received 1 Serjeant and 88 Rank and File from England whilst 46 Spanish recruits had been enlisted, making an increase of 135. There had been 116 deaths, of which 9 were at Ciudad Rodrigo and 62 were men killed or died of wounds at Badajoz. Fifty-eight men had been invalided or sent home whilst 10 had been transferred. In November there were 22 "missing" apparently during the retreat and at the passage of the Huebra. The net results of these changes were to reduce the strength of the Battalion from 694 Riflemen to 620 at the end of the year.

The 2nd Battalion had begun the year with only two Companies with a strength of 7 Officers, 10 Sergeants, 2 Buglers and 181 R. & F. with the Light Division. In July it was increased to four Companies by the arrival of two Companies (strength 9 Officers, 12 Sergeants, 4 Buglers and 202 Riflemen) from England and in October to six when Cadoux's and Jenkins's Companies rejoined. No Spanish recruits appear to have been enlisted. Only 58 deaths are recorded during the year of which 16 were at Badajoz. Thus the strength of the 2nd Battalion serving with the Light Division was increased to 516 Riflemen by the end of the year.

The 3rd Battalion which had begun the year at La Encina with five Companies only, 363 strong, received a draft of 10 Sergeants, 4 Buglers and 162 Riflemen from England in July and another of 92 Riflemen in December. Only 9 Spaniards were enlisted. During the year there were 108 deaths, of which 7 were at Ciudad Rodrigo and 36 were at Badajoz. The following is taken from the *Monthly States* of 25 December 1812 :—

History of the Rifle Brigade

(1) ON SERVICE IN SPAIN.

	Cos	Station	Officers	Sergts.	Buglers	Riflemen
1st Battalion	6	Alameda ...	29	39	18	620
2nd "	6	Nava de Aver	25	35	9	516
3rd "	5	Espeja ...	23	27	11	484
Totals ...	17	—	77	101	38	1,620

(2) RESERVE COMPANIES AND DEPOTS IN ENGLAND.

	Cos	Station	Riflemen
1st Battalion ...	2	Shorncliffe Barracks ...	42
2nd " ...	4	" " ...	213
3rd " ...	5	" " ...	274
—	11	—	529



LIGHT DIVISION THEATRE.

GALLEGOS.

On Thursday the 4th February 1813

Will be performed the COMEDY of
THE RIVALS.

MEN.

Sir ANTHONY ABSOLUTE	...	Lieut. TYLDEN-PATTENSON, 43rd Regt.
Capt. ABSOLUTE	...	Capt. BECKWITH, 95th Regt.
FAULKLAND	...	Lieut. PEMBERTON, 95th Regt.
Sir LUCIUS O'TRIGGER	...	Lieut. COX, 95th Regt.
ACRES	...	Capt. CATOR, Royal Artillery.
DAVID	...	Lieut. HENNEL, 43rd Regt.
FAG	...	Lieut. HAVELOCK, 43rd Regt.
COACHMAN	...	Lieut. HAMILTON, 95th Regt.

WOMEN.

Mrs. MALAPROP	...	Capt. HOBKIRK, 43rd Regt.
LYDIA LANGUISH	...	Lieut. Honble. C. GORE, 43rd Regt.
JULIA	...	Lieut. Lord C. SPENCER, 95th Regt.
LUCY	...	Lieut. FREER, 43rd Regt.

After which a Variety of Comic Songs.

VIVAT WELLINGTON.

Printed at Freneda.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CAMPAIGN OF VITORIA, 1813.

General line held by French Armies during the winter of 1812-13—Guerrilla risings in the North—Distribution of the Spanish Armies—Value of British Sea-power—Wellington's famous plan of Campaign—Dispositions to oppose Wellington's advance—Opening of the Campaign of 1813—General summary of Wellington's advance to the Douro—Final composition of the Light Division—The advance to Salamanca—Light Dragoons and Ross's guns engaged—The Douro crossed at Toro—King Joseph's uncertainties—He falls back on the Pisuerga—Reille's rear-guard driven from the Hormaza—The Light Division cross the Ebro—A beautiful Country—Joseph's stand at Pancorbo—Wellington turns his right flank—The French Armies cut off from the Coast—Wellington's change of base—An outcome of British Sea-power—The Combat of San Millan—Vitoria and its surroundings—Joseph decides to stand and fight at Vitoria—Wellington's orders for the attack—Battle of Vitoria—The Light Division cross the Zadorra—The 95th Rifles cover the advance of Picton's Division—Capture of Ariñez—Lieut. Fitz Maurice takes the *first* French gun—The final advance—King Joseph's flight—Enormous booty taken by the victors—The Pursuit—Successive stands by French rear-guards—The Riflemen capture *the last* of the French guns—The pursuers halt outside Pamplona—Losses in the Battle—Retreat of King Joseph's Army to the French Frontier—Wellington attempts to intercept Clausel's retreat, but fails—Suchet's operations in Eastern Spain during the Vitoria campaign.

See Map
"Spain and
Portugal"
at end of
volume.

AFTER Wellington went into winter quarters in November 1812 the general dispositions of the French Army were on a line from the western spurs of the Galician mountains through Salamanca and Toledo to Alicante. Soult commanded in the centre and was at Toledo with a detachment pushed forward in the valley of the Tagus to the Tietar to watch Hill who was at Coria, and another at Talavera to keep an eye on the Spanish forces. He sent a third force to watch

del Parque near the Sierra Morena. On his right at Avila was Foy's Division to protect Madrid from an advance in that direction. Reille's "Army of Portugal" was on the line or the Tormes at Salamanca and Alba de Tormes with troops on the Esla at Leon and Benavente and also on the Douro at Toro, Tordesillas and Valladolid. Suchet was on the extreme left in Valencia. King Joseph and Jourdan were with the "Army of the Centre," about Madrid whilst Caffarelli's "Army of the North" was in rear of the French right to protect Navarre and Guipuscoa and guard the line to France.

Since Napoleon had withdrawn so many troops for Russia the guerrilla bands had become far more formidable, for they had increased not only in numbers but in discipline and formed a most serious menace to the line of communications with France. Owing to the British command of the sea our ships were able to supply them at many points between Coruña and Santander and even landed some artillery. As the winter wore on, matters got rapidly worse; the famous guerrilla Mina having assembled 5,000 men in Guipuzcoa and obtained guns from the British squadron off the coast, attacked Villar Real near Vitoria. Caffarelli now moved against him and sought to pacify the country, but without success and Napoleon in February ordered Clausel to supersede him in his command. The great French depot in the fortress of Pamplona was beset by the guerrilleros who cut off all supplies. By April it was reckoned that 40,000 of them were in the field, of these some 16,000 under Mendizabel, Longa and others, supported by the British squadrons, were near the coast. No less than 16,000 French troops were employed in keeping open the line from Burgos to Irun. Clausel obtained some reinforcements but although he had several minor successes in Navarre the guerrilleros kept the whole country in a ferment. It is impossible to give details here of the complex movements of this period. The unfortunate King Joseph was called upon to reinforce various points and as a rule failed to take action in time.

So it was that whilst Wellington during the winter months steadily reorganized his forces and received reinforcements, the French Armies, in the words of Napier, were being disorganized.

Meanwhile the Spanish Armies had been gradually restoring their strength. In Catalonia there were 10,000 men under Copons, in Murcia 20,000, in the Sierra Morena 12,000 and in Andalucia 15,000. In April the small Anglo-Sicilian force at Alicante under Murray, now 16,000 strong, defeated Suchet at Castalla, who attacked him with 15,000 men, and then retired on Almanza. The British Fleet operating all along the eastern coast of Spain used every available port to land supplies for these armies just as our squadrons along the northern coast assisted the Galician Army and the guerrilla bands. The value of the co-operation of our Fleet was enormously increased by the fact that the lines of communication to France along both sides of Spain run close to the sea coast. In addition to the numbers already given, Castaños's Army in Estremadura with the Galicians and guerrilla bands numbered 40,000 men.

Wellington's position in the Peninsula had been vastly improved by the events in Russia during the preceding year and the terrible disasters which had befallen the French Armies in the retreat from Moscow. For no longer could Napoleon send reinforcements to King Joseph or his Marshals. True he had still 230,000 men in Spain but of these only 120,000 could be devoted to barring the northern route to France. In addition there were about 30,000 men in reserve at Bayonne. So it was that Wellington reckoning on the Spanish troops to keep the invaders occupied in Catalonia and elsewhere, conceived the great project of attacking the French Armies which were concentrated behind the Douro by detaching an army some 40,000 strong under Graham to march northward through Traz os Montes to the Esla river and thus turn the line of the Douro whilst he himself with his remaining force of 30,000 moved direct on Salamanca with the object of

forcing the passage of the Tormes, crossing the Douro and then joining hands with Graham. The Galician Army under Castaños was now to join him and the combined forces, some 90,000 strong, were to advance on a broad front and drive the French back to the Pyrenees. Truly did Napier write of it: "A grand design and grandly it was executed."

The disposition of the available French forces to oppose Wellington's expected advance was as follows: Early in May King Joseph was at Valladolid with 9,000 cavalry and over a hundred guns. D'Erlon was at Segovia with three divisions. Gazan was at Arevalo, also with three divisions, Conroux at Avila and Leval at Madrid with advanced posts at Toledo. When Wellington advanced on 20 May Joseph's right was formed of Reille's cavalry on the line of the Esla, his centre of three divisions at Zamora, Toro and other places on the Douro and his left by Villatte's Division on the line of the Tormes from Ledesma to Alba. Valladolid was thus Joseph's point of concentration and, as Napier points out, both Conroux at Avila and Leval at Madrid were so placed as to be outside of any plan to collect his forces on the Douro to oppose the advance of the Allies.

Wellington began his advance by sending the cavalry of his left wing across the Douro at Oporto and Lamego into Traz os Montes, and about 15 May Graham's infantry and artillery together with the recently constituted pontoon train crossed the river between Lamego and Castello de Alva in large boats and marched in several columns along the right bank of the Douro towards the lower Esla. Two brigades of cavalry moved on the left flank through Bragança, and one infantry column was detached to march with these. On the 20th Hill marching from Coria reached Bejar and two days later Wellington with his right wing advanced direct on Salamanca. This consisted of five divisions of Anglo-Portuguese and Spanish infantry, four brigades of cavalry including some Spanish irregulars and artillery.

On the 24th Villatte drew in his detachment from Ledesma and

See Map
"Lisbon to
Valladolid"
at end of
volume.

on the morning of the 26th Wellington's columns appeared after a well-timed march, he himself advancing on Salamanca, with Hill on his right moving on the fords above that city, whilst a Spanish division and some cavalry advanced on Alba de Tormes. Villatte, ordering his detachment at Alba to join him, attempted to hold the bridge at Salamanca but a brigade of British cavalry and some guns crossed at Santa Marta and threatened his rear whilst another brigade forced the bridge and he had to retire in haste to Babila Fuente pursued by our cavalry who captured seven guns. Villatte made a most gallant retreat in the face of overpowering numbers. Thus was lost the line of the Tormes.

On the two following days Wellington's force moved on Zamora and Toro, he himself on the 29th crossing the Douro by the famous basket-rope bridge at Miranda and joining Graham, who was near Carvajales and still on the right (west) bank of the Esla with the Galicians on his left. On the 31st the British Hussars drove in the French cavalry posts and the pontoon bridge was thrown and the passage begun. On 1 June Graham entered Zamora and the French, after destroying the bridges there and at Toro, retreated. Our Hussar Brigade pursued them and there was a sharp affair of cavalry near Morales on the following day in which 200 prisoners were taken. On the 3rd the Galicians came up on the left and on the same day the right wing crossed the Douro by the bridge at Toro which had been repaired. Such, in outline, were the results of Wellington's advance to the Douro ; he had by his brilliant strategy forced the French with hardly a blow to abandon very strong positions on the Esla and Douro which had they been properly defended by the troops at King Joseph's disposal would have compelled him to make a difficult and hazardous attack.

Let us now turn to the Light Division and see how it fared during the advance, and before doing so it will be well to give its composition in this, the last year of its service in the Peninsula.

The Campaign of Vitoria, 1813

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THE LIGHT DIVISION.

Major-General Baron Charles Alten (Commanding).

The Chestnut Troop, Royal Horse Artillery : Captain Hew Ross.

14th Light Dragoons.

1st Regiment of Hussars (King's German Legion) : Lieut.-Colonel von Arentschildt.

1st Brigade.

Major-General James Kempt.

1st Battalion, 43rd Light Infantry.

1st Battalion, 95th Rifles.

3rd Battalion, 95th Rifles.

17th Portuguese Regiment of the Line.

2nd Brigade.

Major-General J. O. Vandeleur.

1st Battalion, 52nd Light Infantry.

2nd Battalion, 95th Rifles.

1st Regiment of Portuguese Caçadores.

3rd Regiment of Portuguese Caçadores.

Major-General Kempt had arrived from England early in April and had taken over command of the 1st Brigade. On 17 May Wellington reviewed the Light Division and the 1st German Hussars on the plains near Espeja. The splendid and soldierlike appearance of all the troops and their sunburnt countenances were very striking.

The actual "fighting strength" of the Rifles when they crossed the Frontier of Spain on 20 May 1813 was as follows :—

	Officers	Sergeants	Buglers	Riflemen
1st Battalion (6 Companies) ...	40	38	17	573
2nd Battalion (6 Companies) ...	25	39	11	411
3rd Battalion (5 Companies) ...	21	26	10	347
	86	103	38	1,331

There had been no less than 127 deaths in the three Battalions since the beginning of the year and in the same period 134 recruits had joined (mostly Spaniards) and there had been one desertion. At the end of April there were 275 men in hospital but with the prospect of the coming Campaign this number was reduced to 238 when the advance took place. Including thirty men "on command" the total "effective N.C.O.s and men" in the return of 25 May was 1,710.¹

On 20 May Barnard took over the command of the 1st Battalion vice Sidney Beckwith invalided. Next day the Battalion left Alameda and crossed the Agueda at Molino clos Flores and camped in a wood near San Felices el Chico. Here the whole Division assembled from their various winter-quarters and with them their old comrades the 14th Light Dragoons and the 1st German Hussars and, of course, the Chestnut Troop. The two Regiments of Life Guards and the "Oxford Blues" also marched with the Light Division. The next day they advanced fifteen miles and camped near Martin del Rio and the following day the 23rd halted close to San Munoz (ten miles) on the Huebra, the 1st Battalion camping on the very identical spot where six months earlier they had held up the French rear-guard and endured such privations. "No acorns now" is an entry of one of the diaries. The weather was glorious and the "country smiling and enchanting with verdure and flowers" and "every man and horse looked happy." Here they halted for a day, no doubt to give Graham time and on the 25th marched again at daybreak, the Light Dragoons and Hussars along a road on the left of the Division and the Household Cavalry along another on the right. Lord Wellington rode with the Light Division along the central road. The following day the advance was resumed at 3.30 a.m. and, when about five miles from Salamanca, our horsemen came on a French cavalry post which fell back on the town.

¹ *Monthly Returns*, 1813, Public Record Office, W.O. 17/2472.

The ground was most suitable for cavalry and the 14th Light Dragoons and Germans with Ross's Troop of Horse Artillery followed in pursuit and, on gaining the bridge, removed the barricade. Villatte aware of the approach of Fane's cavalry now withdrew from the town to the heights of Cabrerizos but was overtaken by Victor Alten's cavalry and by Fane's horsemen in the open country. Villatte formed his regiments into squares but the British guns opened fire on them and inflicted severe losses, over 200 being killed and about the same number of prisoners taken, with seven guns, before they found safety in the defiles of Aldea Lengua. "We gave their squares a devil of a pounding with our artillery" is the summary of this day's work. That night the Light Division camped on the left bank of the Tormes, opposite to the village of Villarmayor having marched about eighteen miles.

After a day's halt, at daybreak on the 28th the Light Division with the German Hussars crossed the Tormes by a ford and marched fifteen miles to Aldea Nueva de Figueroa. Here they halted until 2 June when they marched on Toro, Hill's Corps remaining at Aldea Nueva. The French had retired early from the town and had destroyed the arch of the bridge across the Douro leading to it. In consequence the Division halted and encamped opposite Toro. All that day and throughout the following night the Engineers were hard at work making the bridge passable for infantry, by lashing ladders vertically to the broken piers and laying planks across just above water level; a small flying bridge was also constructed. As soon as light admitted on 3 June the Light Division began to cross the river, the men descending the ladders one by one and crossing the planks in Indian file and re-ascending the ladders on the far side. Some also crossed by the flying bridge; the guns and baggage animals got across through a deep ford.¹ Officers note that the line of the Douro was

¹ John Cox, MS. Journal.

very favourable for defence, since the far bank commanded the approaches to it and the French had constructed various redoubts, but as we have seen, Graham's passage of the Esla and the enterprise of the Hussar Brigade had on 2 June, as already described, disposed of the French cavalry corps which had been left as a rear-guard at Toro. Between 11 and 12 o'clock the whole of the Division was across and camped at the village of Tejera Buena one and a half miles beyond Toro.

See Map
XXVI,
p. 474.

On the 4th a start was made, as usual at dawn, and after a long and burning march which Leach notes as "seven Spanish leagues (about thirty English miles)" but which modern maps reduce to twenty-two miles, camped on the heights near the College of La Espina on the road to Valladolid. Next day they reached Castromonte and found there the brigade of Heavy Dragoons and D'Urban's Portuguese Cavalry Division. On the 7th the Light, 3rd and 4th Divisions marched on and encamped near Palencia twenty-seven miles north-east of Valladolid. Here the inhabitants showed the greatest joy at the arrival of the British Army. They said that King Joseph had left the city only the previous day, after having reviewed the rear-guard which did not remain to receive our advancing troops.

Meanwhile King Joseph continued to be the prey of conflicting reports from all sides, upon receipt of which he issued successive bewildering orders. On the evening of the 2nd Reille reported that Wellington had turned his right and was advancing on the Carrion. On the 3rd a big convoy from Madrid arrived and Joseph's scattered forces began to concentrate. Conroux joined Leval at Olmedo and returned northward. The bridge on the Douro at Tudela as well as those on the Pisuerga were destroyed and Joseph sent orders to Foy, Sarrut and Clausel to join him near Burgos.

Wellington now bridged the Douro at Pollos and thus secured communication with his left wing. Supplies were collected at Valladolid and the advance to the Carrion was carried out with rapidity

with the Galician Army on the left and Sanchez's and other Spanish troops on the right.

King Joseph on reaching the Carrion had decided to fall back on the upper Pisuerga. He had now about 55,000 men with him. On the 2nd he heard from Jourdan that Burgos was untenable, the new works were unfinished and supplies were lacking and worst of all, that there was no news of either Clausel or Foy. So it was that he decided to fall back behind the Ebro. Orders were at once issued to draw in the French advanced posts and to move the depot at Burgos on Vitoria where were shortly collected the artillery depots of Madrid and Valladolid with an enormous mass of stores, baggage and booty and a French treasure convoy, just arrived from Bayonne.

Wellington pressed forward vigorously ; on 7 June he crossed the Carrion and continued his advance, always with his left wing under Graham and with the Galicians on the extreme left, well in advance. Gazan and d'Erlon were on the Burgos road ; Reille was on their right at Castrogeriz, but Wellington crossed the Pisuerga on the 9th and 10th and outflanked him. Meanwhile the right wing under Hill pressed on towards Burgos. Reille regained the Burgos road and took up a position in rear of the Hormaza river.

On the morning of the 12th the Light Division with the Hussar and Heavy Dragoon Brigades advanced and found the French in position near the villages of Isar and Hornillas on the Hormaza river. The Division was halted on the heights above until the advance of Hill's Corps should compel the enemy to abandon the villages. When this took place the Light Cavalry and Horse Artillery pursued the retiring French and inflicted considerable damage on their square before they reached the river Urbel which they crossed in great confusion. The Light Division had formed for attack but as the enemy got over a mile's start, neither it nor Hill's Corps could overtake them during their retreat. That night the Light Division with the Hussars and Heavies camped near the villages held by the French in the morning.

Shortly before daybreak on the 13th a heavy explosion from the direction of Burgos announced that the French had blown up the Castle and fortifications. Sad to say, owing to some error of the Engineers a huge wall was blown outwards just as a column of Frenchmen were marching out of the town and no less than 300 were killed, a cruel fate for such fine soldiers. On the 14th the Light Division halted between Quintanajuar and Poza.

On the 15th the Light and 4th Divisions with the Hussars and Heavies marched down to the Ebro and crossed it by the stone bridge at Puente Arenas. Simmons describes how, as they passed the bridge "our band struck up the 'Downfall of Paris,' we were much amused at their wit on this occasion and we had it followed by a national tune or two to remind us of Old England and absent friends."¹

All the diaries of this time refer with the greatest enthusiasm to the marvellous change of scenery when the valley of the Ebro was reached. The following is the entry in Lieutenant William Cox's journal.

"Crossed the Ebro by the bridge of Puente de Arinha (sic). The Appearance of the Country was Beautiful here, hitherto we had marched over an uninteresting Flat Country without being able to procure refreshments of any kind, but now we got Fruits and Vegetables in Abundance and excellent French butter."

Leach's description of the country from Salamanca to the Ebro is "very ugly, dry scorched, brown, blackguard-looking, woodless and waterless." Those who have seen the central plateau of Spain in the summer will appreciate the adjectives. Kincaid summarizes the delights of the valley of the Ebro thus: 'I lay down that night with my head on a melon and my eye on an apple tree.' "

On the 16th the advance was resumed along the left bank of

¹ Simmons, p. 287. The allusion to the band is of interest, for it has been asserted that there were no bands at this time in Spain. Many regiments had bands.

the Ebro which here runs through a narrow pass between lofty cliffs for a few miles, after which the road led up through wooded heights. That night the Division camped beyond Medina del Pomar on the Trueba river. On the 17th the Light Division was detached and marched through a difficult mountainous country densely wooded and impassable for artillery. Some forty miles north-east of Burgos the great road to France traverses narrow passes amid the rocky heights of Pancorbo, and here King Joseph sought to make a stand so as to allow of reinforcements joining him. He had with him Gazan who held the front of the pass. Reille was on his right at Espejo to watch the main road to Bilbao and d'Erlon on the left to guard the road from Burgos on Logroño. So little did Joseph know of the true line of advance of the Allies ! But Wellington had no idea of making a frontal attack on the fortified pass of Pancorbo and on the same day that his right wing under Hill crossed the Ebro at Puente Arenas, the left wing under Graham crossed its upper waters by the bridges of Rocamunde and San Martin some twenty miles higher up and marched on Orduña.

The effect of this movement was to cut off Joseph's Armies from the sea coast. The French thereupon abandoned all the sea ports except Santoña, which was invested by the Spanish Forces, and Bilbao. British ships now were free to enter Santander and thence communications were established with Burgos. By this dramatic exhibition of her sea-power England's communications through Portugal, which had existed since the landing in Mondego Bay in 1808, were transferred to the Biscayan ports, thus shortening the sea-transport by many days and, what was far more important, eventually eliminating hundreds of miles of road transport from the nearest navigable point on the Douro.

King Joseph received reports of Wellington's turning movement and ordered Reille to Osma, ten miles south of Orduna. Reille at once ordered Maucune's Division which was at Frias on the Ebro to join him and arrived with his other Division at Osma on the 18th, only in time

to see Graham sweeping down upon the place through the valleys to his front with the 1st, 3rd and 5th Divisions and a strong force of cavalry. A sharp combat followed and Reille fell back, fighting, on Espejo. When in full retreat he suddenly came upon a mass of Maucune's men, broken and in disorder, who were fleeing over the hillsides and through the deep valleys before a British force. What this force was I shall now describe.

THE COMBAT OF SAN MILLAN.

On this same morning of 18 June at 6 o'clock the Light Division and 1st German Hussars advanced through the hills by a mountain road, the advance-guard consisting of one squadron of German Horse and the six Companies of the 1st Battalion. A short distance in front of the village of San Millan, a French cavalry piquet was found, which the Hussars charged with great spirit, taking about a dozen prisoners.

The French troops in San Millan were the 1st Brigade of Maucune's Division on the march to join Reille and so little did the French know of the close proximity of the Allied Army that Maucune halted the Brigade in the valley of the Boveda near San Millan without throwing out piquets whilst he awaited the arrival of his 2nd Brigade with his baggage. "The surprise was apparently equally great on both sides." From accounts of those who took part in the fight about half an hour passed before Alten would allow an attack to be made. According to Leach, Wellington suddenly appeared among them and ordered the 1st and 3rd Battalions to attack the French infantry in San Millan. Wellington's sudden appearance on this occasion is thus noted. "I know not where his headquarters were last night but he appears to be everywhere when a fight is going on by any of the Divisions." Kincaid who was Adjutant to Barnard describes how as they descended the hill, which was much overgrown with

brushwood, to attack, three Companies were extended in skirmishing order keeping the other three in reserve. Neither side had so far fired a shot but the French now threw out skirmishers and at the same time "put their column in a running pace" to get clear of the flank fire of the Riflemen. The French returned a sharp fire and Lieutenant Haggup was seriously wounded and a few men were killed or wounded. Napier describes how at this time "The British Riflemen dashed down the hill with loud cries and a bickering fire." Our Riflemen lost no time in closing on the French as they filed out of the town and caused them much loss by hanging on to the flank of their column. Maucune disposed a battalion on the heights behind the village to try and cover the retreat. Leach describes how Wellington now personally ordered four Companies of the 1st Battalion to turn their right flank, this had the "instantaneous effect of sending them off in haste, nor did they offer any serious opposition."

William Cox who was in the fight, says that behind the village "the Rifles actually pulled a *chef de bataillon* and several men out of the *Mele* (sic) they got into." The Riflemen hunted the flying Frenchmen through the village of Valpuesta and beyond, taking some prisoners and light baggage. Beyond Villanueva the retreating French were joined by some of their comrades and took up a strong position barring the road. No attempt was made to dislodge them, but later, they continued their retreat. The men of the 1st and 3rd Battalions were now reassembled and at nightfall the 1st Brigade camped below Villanueva. Owing to the celerity of Barnard's advance the remainder of the 1st Brigade (43rd and 17th Portuguese and 3rd Caçadores) were not sufficiently advanced to come into action.

Whilst Kempt's Brigade of the Light Division was thus occupied in the pursuit of the 1st Brigade of Frenchmen, Maucune's 2nd Brigade debouched from a valley on the right of Vandeleur's Brigade, which was

halted in reserve. The 2nd Battalion of the Rifles at once extended to attack it, and the 52nd, who were threatened in flank, wheeled round and running up a hill at speed met the French at the summit and drove them back in confusion, many of them threw off their packs and retired fighting across the mountain side towards Miranda. The French train of pack animals was broken up and dispersed all over the rocky hills; the baggage escort rallied and fought hard to protect their charge but all was of no avail and the whole of the French baggage, as well as some 300 prisoners, fell into the hands of Vandeleur's men. Thus whilst Maucune's 1st Brigade was seeking safety at Espejo pursued by the Riflemen of the 1st and 3rd Battalions, his 2nd Brigade was retiring across country towards Miranda with the 2nd Battalion at its heels. A Spanish detachment continued the pursuit and hunted down many of the scattered Frenchmen.¹ It was the fugitives from this fight which Reille met when falling back before Graham on Espejo. The losses in this affair were trivial, only one officer being wounded with four Riflemen killed and thirteen wounded.

San Millan was the first affair in the Campaign of 1813 in which the Regiment was actually engaged and it is recorded that the Riflemen went into action on this day with peculiar zest for they were "red-hot at retaliating for the Salamanca retreat." During the day heavy cannonading was heard on the left, this was the 5th Division advancing from Espejo and Osma.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 19th the Light Division

¹ When Captain Moorsom wrote his "History of the 52nd" in 1860 he only described the part taken by the 2nd Brigade (with which was the 52nd) in this fight, omitting mention of the work of the 1st Brigade. This caused Sir John Kincaid to send him a full account of the attack of the 1st Brigade. In consequence Captain Moorsom in his 2nd edition (also published in 1860) gave some further details. By great good fortune his son Lieutenant-Colonel H. M. Moorsom sent me some years ago Kincaid's letter to his father written on 10 March 1860 and signed by him and I have used this letter freely in my description of this fight.

marched off and ascended a steep mountain near the village of Salinas (so called from the salt springs in the vicinity). As our men crossed a clear spring dashing down the face of the hillside, many of them dipped their "tin-tots" and took a hearty swig before they discovered that the water was strongly saline. Kincaid records how an Irishman after taking a second gulp exclaimed, "By J—s, boys, we must be near the sea for the water's getting salt." Late in the day the Division crossed the river Bayas at Poves and camped. The 4th Division, which had relieved the 5th Division at Espejo and marched on a parallel route on the left of the Light Division, was engaged for some hours with the enemy's light troops which this day retired before them towards Vitoria.

The following day the baggage taken at San Millan was sold by auction for the benefit of the 2nd Brigade, the captors of it. Horses, mules, boxes, trunks and all sorts of equipment were thus disposed of including "a variety of female attire—satins, silks, etc., and flounces and all kinds of devilment," for there were several Spanish ladies, wives and friends of the French officers, with Maucune's Division. There was considerable dissatisfaction in the 1st Brigade—"The Brigade which came in for the blows"—at the whole proceeds of the sale being divided among the 2nd Brigade—"the Brigade which came in for the baggage." On this day General Hill's Corps halted close to the right of the Light Division. The 2nd Battalion of the Rifles was posted on the ridge of high hills which separated them from the 4th Division so as to keep in touch with it. How near the Light Division Camp at Poves was to the French Army may be judged from the following entry in William Cox's Diary. "20th, I ascended a hill this Evening and saw the fires of the Enemy distinctly on the plain in front of Vitoria."

I must now describe the district where King Joseph had at last been compelled to stand and make a fight for it. The town of Vitoria

See Map XXVI (inset), p. 474. lies on an extensive undulating plain divided into several low parallel ranges and surrounded by a series of high mountains and hills on every side. The River Zadorra, which is two miles north of the town, runs almost due west for six miles when it turns sharply to the south and after another four miles runs through the Pass of La Puebla and enters the Ebro below Miranda. The main road from Burgos and Pancorbo lies through Miranda and Vitoria and thence past the fortress of San Sebastian to the frontier at Irun and on to Bayonne. From Vitoria a good road branches off north-westward to Orduña and Bilbao. East of Vitoria there is a road running southward to Logroño, another running eastward to Pamplona and one leading northward on Durango. All these roads were passable for artillery in 1813, but the only possible one for the retreat of a force such as Joseph's with much baggage and train was the *camino real*, the "royal" road to Bayonne.

Joseph's dispositions were as follows. His right under Reille was to hold the line of the Zadorra from the Durango to the Bilbao roads, facing north. His centre under Gazan held four miles of the river from Arriaga on the "royal" road to the village of Margarita, also facing north and thence swinging back to the main road west of Ariñez. His left under Marinsin was on the high ground facing north-west from Subijana de Alva to the spurs of La Puebla mountains, about two miles, and guarded the exit from the Pass of La Puebla and also the line of the Zadorra up to Villodas. In second line was d'Erlon's Army. The cavalry with many heavy guns was in reserve near Gomecha in the centre of the plain. Finally, the bridges across the Zadorra at Nanclares, Villodas, Tres Puentes and Mendoza were commanded by about fifty guns placed in position.

Wellington had halted on the 20th so as to close up his columns. His dispositions for the attack on the following day were simple enough and provided for three separate lines of advance. His left, consisting of the 1st and 5th Divisions, two Portuguese Brigades, a Spanish

Division and two Brigades of cavalry, some 20,000 men with 18 guns, under Graham was to move by Murguia on the Bilbao road and force a passage at Gamarra Mayor and at Arriaga and thus turn the French right. His right, under Hill with the 2nd Division, some Spanish and Portuguese Brigades with cavalry and artillery, was to move through the Pass of La Puebla and thus turn the French left and gain possession of the bridge of Nanclares. In the centre, Wellington himself with the Light Division, the 3rd, 4th and 7th Divisions, the bulk of the Artillery, the Heavy Cavalry and D'Urban's Portuguese horse, altogether 30,000 men, were to cross the Morillas heights by various routes and attack the line of the Zadorra at the four bridges of Nanclares, Villodas, Tres Puentes and Mendoza. The total number which Wellington brought into action was about 60,000 Anglo-Portuguese troops and 20,000 Spanish. Always cautious, he had left the 6th Division under Pakenham, near 6,500 strong, at Medina del Pomar to cover the march of his baggage, reserve ammunition and supplies. King Joseph's Army was about 70,000 strong, and thus somewhat less in numbers than that of the Allies; the French artillery was however superior to the British both in number and in the calibre of the guns.

THE BATTLE OF VITORIA.

21 June 1813.

At daylight on 21 June Wellington advanced; it was a wet and misty morning and the various columns threaded their way from their bivouacs on the Bayas river through the valleys assigned to them. Soon, Hill's movement on the right developed and as it did so, the day cleared.

I will now describe the part taken by the Light Division and more especially the Rifles in this famous battle, for as will be seen, unlike Salamanca it was the great good fortune of the Regiment to take a

leading part in what must ever be regarded as one of the most famous and decisive of the victories of the British Army.

The Division was under arms long before daylight and marching below the northern spurs of the big ridge of hills, through the camp of the 4th Division who were still asleep in their tents, it approached the banks of the River Zadorra near the village of Tres Puentes. On reaching some high wooded ground the regiments halted and piled arms. The enemy's advanced posts were on the far side of the river and the Riflemen of the 1st Battalion, which was leading, lay down just out of musket shot of the foe, and waited for orders. Here they were shortly joined by the 4th Division. Whilst thus halted Wellington appeared and rode down close to the river to reconnoitre. The French opposite, seeing this, sent out a number of *voltigeurs* who rushed across the bridge of Villodas and gained a village and a wooded height on the right bank, whence they opened fire on the Staff. The 3rd Battalion and two Companies of the 1st Battalion which were on that flank were at once ordered to fall in and drive out the *voltigeurs*. This they did ; thus commencing the great Battle,¹ although the first actual advance to attack was made by Hill's Corps on the right. As soon as the village was cleared a half-Company of the 3rd Battalion was ordered to hold it. Soon after a sharp musketry fire on the right which gradually increased in violence showed that Hill's advance was being pressed. All three Battalions of the 95th were now ordered to advance and feel the enemy, the *voltigeurs* having recrossed the bridge and extended along the far bank of the river. A heavy cannonade from some guns posted on the high ground beyond the river was now opened on our men and the land being very stony and broken and the Riflemen being scattered among the rocks, suffered almost as much from splinters of

¹ Surtees, "Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade," pp. 203-4. Costello, *Adventures*, p. 158.

rock as from the balls themselves. Several Riflemen who were lining a garden wall were struck down by the same cannon-ball.

It was now near noon and some of Hill's Corps were seen to be crossing the hills on the French left, whilst the rising smoke and sound of cannon on the far French right showed that Graham's attack had begun. About this time a Spanish peasant reported that there was a bridge up-stream across the Zadorra which was undefended. The 1st and 3rd Battalions were at once moved rapidly to this point and found the bridge of Tres Puentes unoccupied. Crossing at speed they gained some rising ground just under the brow of the hill in front, and halted. Shortly they saw the glitter of the bayonets above the high standing corn as the 3rd Division advanced towards the bridge of Mendoza (the one above where our men had crossed). The French also saw the British infantry approaching and sent down some cavalry and a crowd of light troops to oppose them. The French light troops were in great force and lining the river bank opened a very sharp fire on the approaching British column whilst a battery also directed its fire on it.

Barnard now with great promptitude swung the 1st Battalion Companies round to the left and, advancing rapidly, opened such a furious fire on the light troops and the battery, taking them both in flank, that they were forced to retire and a Brigade of the 3rd Division was able to cross the bridge without further opposition or loss.

The 7th Division was equally fortunate and, together with Colville's Brigade of the 3rd Division, forded the river a little way above the bridge, without loss, and were at once engaged. Thus Barnard's quick action was of the greatest value. Most unfortunately the rapidity of the advance of our Riflemen who had got amongst the French skirmishers, combined with their dark dress, caused a British battery on the far side of the river to open fire on them and several of our men were struck down, nor did the guns cease firing until some of Picton's red-coats joined the green-jackets.

The 7th Division after crossing was sharply engaged on its left and Wellington now ordered all three Divisions to attack the low hill in rear of which stood the village of Ariñez, the centre of the French advanced position. Kempt's Brigade at once advanced to the attack covered by the skirmishers of the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the Rifles; on its left was Picton's Division whose advance was likewise covered by two Companies of the 1st Battalion. The combined wave of Riflemen soon cleared the hill and were advancing down the reverse slope when they were held up by some French infantry, a battalion of which, posted along the outer walls of the village, opened a sudden blaze of fire on them at short range as they came into view. Wellington, who assuredly bore a charmed life, actually rode up the hill close in rear of the line of our two Companies of Riflemen covering the front of Picton's Division and in advance of his infantry. How close he was to our men may be judged from the fact that he called out to them "That's right, my lads! keep up a good fire."¹ That Picton himself was not far behind Wellington may be taken as granted. Kincaid who was with the two Companies says, "Old Picton rode at the head of the 3rd Division dressed in a blue coat and a round hat and swore as

¹ This matter of the 95th Rifles having covered the advance of Picton's Division in the attack and capture of the village of Ariñez is one which I would not venture to repeat were it not that it is vouched for by no less an authority than the Duke himself. For in his despatches (Vol. X, p. 529, Ed. 1838) there is a letter from him to Sir Thomas Picton, dated Lesaca, 16 July 1813 dealing with the advance of the 3rd Division which runs as follows: "The disposition for the action was for the 3rd, 4th and Light Divisions to attack the hill in front of Ariñez which hill the enemy abandoned. The Riflemen of the Light Division were the first to ascend the hill and I went up immediately after them in order to see the disposition of the enemy on their retreat behind it. The —th came up next in extreme disorder and I halted them and made them form under the brow of the hill, the 95th being stopped by the fire of one or two battalions of the enemy formed on its declivity below the top and Ariñez." The Duke then requested Picton to consider whether his censure on the troops under him "should not apply exclusively to the light infantry or other skirmishers in front of the —th Regiment."

roundly all the way as if he had been wearing two cocked ones." Meanwhile the Riflemen as we have seen were momentarily checked, but some of Picton's advancing infantry deployed into line and gave the French a volley which dislodged them and the Riflemen clearing the walls rushed into the village and onward through it and captured three guns. These were the first captured by the Allies on this famous day. The first of these was taken by Lieutenant Fitz Maurice and two Riflemen of the 1st Battalion. Observing that the French Artillery, a battery of six guns, was retreating and believing that he could intercept it Fitz Maurice started with his Company; but they being in heavy marching order were not able to keep up with him. Five guns had passed before he reached the road; he caught the leading horses of the sixth, and stopped them. The driver drew a pistol and fired at him but the bullet passed through his cap. He called on the two men with him to fire, and one of the horses fell, which completely checked the gun. Then the rest of the Company came up, cut the traces, and made the three drivers and four gunners prisoners. However, just beyond Ariñez the enemy rallied a strong battalion which advanced on the Riflemen, forced them to retreat about a hundred yards, and to give up possession of the captured guns. But our men having cut the traces with their swords, taken away the horses, and killed many of the gunners, when they saw the head of the 3rd Division advancing, went forward again; and thus reinforced drove the enemy finally from the village, and captured and retained possession of the guns.

Soon after Barnard's daring advance across the river the 2nd Brigade of the Light Division had swung off to the left to reinforce the 7th Division which, after fording the river had come under a heavy fire from guns near the village of Margarita. In this attack the 2nd Battalion covered the front and the 52nd made a fine charge and captured the village and soon after, Gough with the 87th carried the

village of Lermanda, about three-quarters of a mile on its left. After the capture of Margarita the Riflemen of the 2nd Battalion came up on the left of those of the 1st and 3rd Battalions, as they pushed forward from Ariñez. During all this time Hill's Corps had been doing splendid work on the British right. The 4th Division had crossed at Nanclares and the 2nd Division with some Spanish and Portuguese troops, moving from La Puebla in two columns, pressed forward on Subijana de Alva and the heights south of it. When however the village of Ariñez was captured the position of Subijana was turned and the French, hard pressed by Hill, in front and also on their left flank, fell back two miles on Gomecha. Throughout the retirement they resisted stoutly, throwing out masses of *tirailleurs* whilst some fifty pieces of cannon played on the advancing Allies.

It was whilst our Riflemen in an extended line of all three Battalions were pressing forward from Ariñez on Gomecha that a big force of darkly-dressed troops was seen to be marching eastward about a mile distant on their right flank towards Vitoria. These were at first taken to be Spaniards, but soon it was discovered that they were a body of Frenchmen who were retiring before Hill's vigorous advance on the right. It was now a question whether the officer commanding the Battalion of the 95th nearest to them should attack them ; his orders, however, to push to his front with all speed were definite and he did not like to depart from them.¹ Thus it was that the Frenchmen were able to hurry on and, outstepping our people, rejoined their main army.

Wellington's centre, with Hill on his right, now again pressed forward and a furious running fight ensued. Again and yet again the

¹ All students of the Peninsular War know well how severe Wellington was on officers who ventured *no matter on what grounds* to take it upon themselves to depart from his orders. Apparently this incident, whereby a considerable body of French troops avoided capture, is the one alluded to by Kincaid in his *Random Shots* (pp. 142-43) and quoted in this volume at pp. 243-44, as an example of the results of not informing officers of the *object* of any operations they may be engaged upon.

French, who although outmanœuvred were by no means beaten, rallied and held successive positions for a time, only to be driven back by the renewed assaults of the Allies. In their hasty withdrawal many of their guns fell into our hands. The last position they held was a ridge about a mile west of Vitoria with their right near the Zadorra and their left astride the great road. Here some eighty guns kept up a furious cannonade on the advancing British, and Picton's 3rd Division was hard put to it to hold the advanced position it had gained. The 4th Division now came up and, seizing a height on the left of the French, completely turned their flank and forced them hurriedly to retreat. All was now wild confusion, the main road was so blocked with carriages that King Joseph could not withdraw his artillery by it and so ordered a retreat by that of Salvatierra on Pamplona and the French fell back in a confused mass along a line south of Vitoria. Our Light Cavalry galloped through the town and our infantry ran forward to endeavour to cut them off from their new line of retreat.

Graham meanwhile had been vigorously attacking Reille's force along the Zadorra and early in the day had seized Durana and so cut off Joseph's retreat by the "royal" road. He now made furious attacks in the villages of Gamarra Mayor and Abechucho to gain the passages of the Zadorra but Reille made a splendid and obstinate defence although outnumbered and held on until Wellington's main advance swept up to Vitoria. Sarrut was killed at the bridge of Arriaga and the Allies poured in on Reille from three sides. His rear-guard at Betoño however held on until he had withdrawn his troops, after which he retreated on Matauco, fighting all the way, and rejoined Joseph's flying army.

I must now return to the doings of our Riflemen on this eventful day. Ever pressing forward they at one time on approaching a village came under a severe cannonade and the three Battalions formed lines and lay down on the ploughed ground. After a check of half an hour

the enemy fell back and they again pushed on. The plains of Vitoria are well adapted for rear-guard actions, for the successive low ranges of hills give excellent positions to hold up a pursuing force, hence the advance throughout the day for our Riflemen has been well described as "one continued hard skirmish." The Light Division did not enter the town of Vitoria but swept forward with a Brigade on either side of it and thus got ahead of some of the other Divisions. About a mile east of the town, the road was completely blocked with hundreds of French vehicles, intermixed with guns, baggage, etc. Here our Riflemen, running for all they were worth, overtook carriage after carriage, now and again shooting a horse in a gun-team and thus blocking the retreat of the others behind it. The plunder made by the soldiers was immense in spite of the efforts of the officers to keep them in the ranks. Leach says truly that an army of sixty or seventy thousand Frenchmen which for years had been living on the country and plundering and levying contributions on the inhabitants had naturally amassed many valuables and much riches. These were now seized upon by the victors. The French military chest fell into our hands and many of the men secured both gold and silver in large quantities. Unfortunately as is ever the case, the great bulk of the booty was looted by the camp followers and thieves, as well as by the worst class of soldiers who had left their regiments to plunder. Many were the dramatic captures made; Jourdan's travelling carriage with his Field-Marshal's bâton was taken by a private in the 87th, whilst King Joseph's travelling carriage in which every dish and toilet article was of solid silver was captured by the 14th Light Dragoons of the Light Division.¹ King Joseph himself had a narrow escape from being taken prisoner having been compelled to quit his carriage, mount his horse and gallop off! Many of the wives of the French officers fell into our hands.

¹ Those who have the pleasure of knowing that gallant Corps now styled the 14th (King's) Hussars will no doubt recall their famous trophy known as "King Joseph" which has graced so many a festive night on the anniversary of "Vitoria."

About six in the evening some of our Riflemen, when engaged with some French skirmishers, captured a carriage loaded with baskets of food, liquor and luxuries, which were made short work of. That night they bivouacked at dark in a field of wheat about two miles beyond Vitoria; they had been marching, fighting and running ever since 3 a.m., nor had they tasted a mouthful all day. In every diary are accounts of the splendid food and excellent wines which fell to the share of the writers.

Early on 22 June the Light Division started in pursuit along the Pamplona road. They were preceded by the 14th Light Dragoons, the 1st German Hussars and Ross's Troop of Horse Artillery. The cavalry overtook the enemy's rear-guard about a league west of Salvatierra and captured about fifty stragglers. All the villages passed were found to be abandoned by the inhabitants. The 4th Division followed the Light Division, which encamped that night at Salvatierra.

As soon as it was daylight on the 23rd the advance was resumed through Ciordia and our men shortly came up with the French rear-guard in position in rear of a small river. The 1st Battalion was leading and, as it approached, the French set fire to the bridge which was of wood and fell back. This however hardly checked the Riflemen who, crossing by a ford below, soon became engaged with the French light troops. Ross's guns supported them and the Light Cavalry worked round the flank and a running fight ensued which lasted all day, under torrents of rain. The French, being hard pressed by our Riflemen and Ross's guns, set fire to the villages after passing through them. When our men arrived, the houses were burning furiously and flaming rafters and portions of the roofs were falling into the street. They however managed to dash through the fire, but it was another matter for the Horse Artillery guns with their tumbrils laden with ammunition. The Riflemen meanwhile pushed on and were well up with the French and in need of support upon which the Chestnut Troop, never to be

See Map
XXVI, p. 474.

deterred, galloped through the burning streets, happily without misadventure, and came into action. The French thereupon continued their retreat through Huarte. That night the Light Division occupied Lacunza and some small villages hard by.

General Kempt who it will be recalled had only taken over command of the 1st Brigade two months earlier and who before that time knew nothing about the Light Division, save by hearsay, was greatly pleased with the conduct of the men on this day and the manner in which they stuck to the heels of the French rear-guard and was heard to say to Barnard: "By G-d, I never saw fellows march so well and in such weather and roads too. I'll order the Commissary to issue them a double allowance of spirits to-night."

On the 24th the Light Division again advanced at daybreak with the 3rd Battalion leading. The advance-guard once again came up with the French rear-guard which was found to be in some strength and holding a position in rear of a small river, the Araquil, rendered impassable by the heavy rains save by a narrow bridge. General Alten now halted the two Battalions and ordered them to put their knapsacks up behind the troopers of the 1st German Hussars, so that they might be able to march with greater freedom and celerity. He then ordered the 3rd Battalion to ascend the mountain side on the left of the road so as to bring a fire to bear from above on the French right, whilst the 1st Battalion lined the banks of the river and opened a smart fire in front. Under this combined attack the French gave way and our Riflemen rushed the bridge and carried on a running fight for about two miles, the French stubbornly contesting every point. Presently the road on which they were moving struck the *camino real* leading from Madrid to Pamplona. The French now detached a battalion by a track down a valley to the right. It was ascertained afterwards that this was done under the mistaken idea that it led back into the main road. After another two miles retirement the French stood again at a narrow

pass between some overhanging rocks. A sharp fight took place, in the midst of which the battalion which had gone off to the right, finding no way out of the valley, suddenly emerged from a wood among our skirmishers. It was roughly handled and suffered severely before it regained the road. Throughout the day our Horse Artillery had caused the greatest admiration by the way they got their guns through an almost impossible country. Now once again they came up and opened on the French and a general fight of the three arms (the Riflemen, German Hussars and Ross's guns) took place which ended in the French rear-guard being driven from its position in the pass into open country beyond. The road at one place crossed a marshy bit of ground on an embankment with steep walled sides near fifteen feet high. The French got two guns into position at this point and opened on our Riflemen. Soon, two of Ross's guns came up and fired with shot and shrapnel on the French, one shot killing two horses of a gun-team and wounding another. So hard pressed were the French that there was no time to disentangle the horses, and the gun, an 8-pounder, horses and all, fell over the embankment. Next moment our Riflemen were among them and seized the gun, Simmons being one of the first officers to come up to it. During the pursuit Victor Alten's cavalry had been also pressing on the retreating French and some of our Riflemen were now mounted behind troopers of the Royal Dragoons and thus continued the pursuit up to the walls of Pamplona. That night the advance-guard of the Light Division occupied Berrioplano and some other small villages close to and on the north of Pamplona. Very early on the 25th the Light Division closed on Pamplona and, marching by the left of it just out of cannon-shot, moved by a mountain road to Villalba and encamped there.¹

¹ This account of the last day's pursuit of the French is taken from a letter of F.-M. Sir Hew D. Ross, G.C.B. who was in command of the Chestnut Troop on that day.

How highly Wellington thought of the work of the Riflemen in this pursuit is shown by his despatches in which they had the high honour of being the only *Regiment* mentioned, together with Ross's troop.

“ *Irurzun, 24th June*

“ 1813.

“ I have to report to your Lordship that we have continued to pursue the enemy whose rear reached Pamplona this day. We have done them as much injury as has been in our power, considering the state of the weather and of the roads and this day the advanced guard consisting of Major-General Victor Alten's Brigade, and the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 95th Regiment and Captain Ross's troop of Horse Artillery, took from them the one remaining gun they had. They have entered Pamplona therefore with one howitzer only.”¹

The remainder of the despatch deals with the movements of Clausel and the Spanish armies.

The capture of this, the *last* gun of King Joseph's army was a source of keen exultation in the Light Division and more especially among the 95th Rifles, for it rounded off their services in the early part of the battle, when, as we have seen, they captured the *first* French gun in the village of Aríñez.

Wellington's report of his captures was 151 brass ordnance and travelling carriages and 415 caissons. The losses of the Allies in the battle were 33 officers 19 sergeants and 688 rank and file killed and 230 officers, 158 sergeants and 3,782 rank and file wounded or a grand total of 5,914 casualties. Of these the Portuguese had 1,049 and the Spaniards 553.

The losses of the British Regiments of the Light Division were 2 officers and 16 men killed and 9 officers with 104 men wounded.

¹ *Well. Desp.* to Earl Bathurst, 24 June 1813.

Those of the Rifles were : In the 1st Battalion one Sergeant and three Riflemen killed and Lieutenant-Colonel A. Cameron, Lieutenants William Cox, John Hopwood and James P. Gairdner, severely wounded, and Lieutenant William Lister slightly wounded. One Sergeant and thirty-six Riflemen were wounded. In the 2nd Battalion Captain John Jenkins and eight Riflemen were wounded and in the 3rd Battalion Lieutenant Leckie Campbell and seven Riflemen were killed and sixteen wounded. The total number of casualties in the Regiment were thus only seventy-nine.

Captain Jenkins died of his wounds on 17 July. He had joined the Rifle Corps a few months after its first formation, on 7 November 1800 and was promoted Captain in the 2nd Battalion on 17 December 1807 and served with it in the Walcheren Expedition. He had seen much fighting in Andalucia, from Barrosa onward, and commanded the Company of Riflemen which took part in the siege of Tarifa. For this he was highly commended as well as for his services at the capture of Seville and at the defence of the bridge of Puente Larga near Aranjuez in 1812.

We must now follow up Wellington's arrangements for the pursuit of the flying and scattered French armies after his great victory.

When on the day after the battle he followed up King Joseph's forces towards Pamplona he left Pakenham at Vitoria and detached Graham with Giron's and Longa's Spaniards in advance to pursue Foy, who was retiring along the "royal" road through Guipuscoa on Irun. Foy ordered his scattered troops to reassemble at Tolosa and on the 22nd endeavoured to hold back Giron and Longa at Mondragon, but was driven back with loss ; three days later, on the 25th, he stood again before Tolosa. Graham now halted for Wellington's orders and Foy, continued his retreat and, after leaving 2,600 men in San Sebastian, crossed the Bidassoa into France on 1 July. Graham followed up and at once invested San Sebastian.

History of the Rifle Brigade

Meanwhile Reille at 5 a.m. on the 22nd had made a stand with two Divisions at Salvatierra where, as we have seen, his rear-guard was vigorously attacked by the Light Division and later, when all the French had got away, he marched to Huarte about thirty miles from Vitoria, and eventually reached Vera on 28 June some ten miles east of San Sebastian and close to the frontier.

Joseph with Gazan and d'Erlon had reached Pamplona on the 24th and his troops bivouacked outside the fortress ; for such was their state of indiscipline and want that the Governor refused to let them in. Joseph, having increased the garrison to 3,000 men, marched onward next day, leaving a rear-guard about six miles east of the fortress to cover his retreat.

It was now that a new factor suddenly entered into Wellington's dispositions. Clausel, who had been holding Zaragoza, whence he could keep in touch with Suchet in Eastern Spain, had on 10 June marched with 14,000 men by Tudela to join King Joseph at Vitoria. Late on the 22nd, when nearing Azaceta about twelve miles south-east of that city, he received news of the King's defeat and that Pakenham was at Vitoria. He was now in a position of some danger and at once fell back on Logroño where he halted until the 25th.

Wellington, who had imagined that Clausel was at Tudela, upon becoming aware of this left Hill to invest Pamplona and marched with all speed on Tafalla taking with him two Brigades of Light Cavalry and the 3rd, 4th, 7th and Light Divisions. He ordered the 5th and 6th Divisions to march upon Logroño whilst Mina and Julian Sanchez followed on Clausel's rear. Early on 26 June the Light Division, followed by the 3rd and 4th Divisions, marched south of the city and camped for the night near Muro. On the following morning at daybreak it marched to Mendivil, fourteen miles, and halted till the afternoon when it moved on and passing through Tafalla, camped in an olive grove north of Olite, altogether twenty-two miles. Clausel,

who was a most able leader, aware of his danger quickly fell back through Calahorra and reached Tudela after a forced march of sixty miles in forty hours, with scarcely a halt. At nightfall on the 27th his intention was to regain France by the Olite-Tafalla road but he now got news that Wellington was at Olite, thus cutting off his retreat. He thereupon recrossed the Ebro and marched south-east along the road to Zaragoza. Wellington, suspecting that Clausel might attempt to work round his left, ordered his troops to leave the Zaragoza road and swing eastward along the San Martin route. The Light Division started at daybreak on the 28th "without losing a moment" and after a march of about twelve miles halted for an hour and a half in a wood near Murillo on the river Aragon. The march was resumed along the river bank to the bridge of Gallipienza where the Division crossed and, marching almost without intermission for the rest of the day through an almost trackless mountainous country until two hours after dark, camped about midnight in a ploughed field near the village of Caseda. The distance covered on this day was twenty-four miles over very bad roads and in most inclement weather. That night a perfect deluge of rain fell, recorded as one of the worst known during the whole war. Wellington now heard that Clausel had received information of his flank march and was in full retreat on Zaragoza and he thereupon abandoned the pursuit. His Divisions had been marching since the 26th without intermission and a halt was called for the next day. Clausel reached Zaragoza on the 30th and took up a position in rear of the river Gallego hoping to be joined by Suchet. Mina meanwhile harassed him so severely that he destroyed some of his artillery and heavy baggage and retired northward on Jaça, so as to secure his retreat by mountain roads across the Pyrenees into France.

Wellington now had no further anxiety as to the security of his right flank and so ordered his Divisions to return to the blockade of Pamplona. His victory at Vitoria was complete. The task now

immediately before him was to reduce Pamplona and to capture the fortress and harbour of San Sebastian so as to consolidate his position and obtain a secure naval base close to the frontier, prior to invading France.

It will be convenient for the purpose of this History if we now briefly follow out the movements of Suchet in Eastern Spain during the months when Wellington had been engaged in his great advance on Vitoria.

Early in 1813 he was still at Valencia and found himself in a position of great difficulty, for although there were still some 70,000 French troops in Aragon and Catalonia he could not collect more than 16,000 Infantry with 2,000 Cavalry and 20 guns for operations beyond the line of the Jucar, south of Valentia. In front of him were the Allies 50,000 strong including Bentinck's Anglo-Sicilian force of 18,000.

Sir John Murray took command of Bentinck's force at Alicante in February and it was placed under Wellington's orders in March as were the troops under the Spanish General Elio.

Suchet now daily expected an attack and so decided to cross the Jucar and to attack himself. On 13 April a battle was fought at Castalla, after which Suchet fell back to the Jucar, where he was left in peace for over a month and considerably strengthened his position. Meanwhile the Anglo-Sicilian force under Murray at Alicante had embarked for Tarragona and early in May with the aid of the Navy laid siege to that place. Suchet thereupon made a forced march on Tortosa to its relief. Murray mismanaged the operations in every possible way and finally, upon Suchet's approach abandoned the siege, spiked his heavy guns and burnt their carriages and re-embarked his force on 12 June. Wellington greatly felt the loss of this battering

VALLADOLID TO FRENCH FRONTIER
AND BATTLE OF VITORIA.

VALLADOLID TO FRENCH FRONTIER
AND BATTLE OF VITORIA.

train, which was the one he had used at Badajoz and which he had only loaned to Murray. Murray was subsequently brought before a Court-Martial for his conduct in this affair. Bentinck now arrived and took command and decided to return to Alicante, attacking Valencia on the way. Suchet on the march northward when nearing Tarragona, upon seeing the British Squadron returning southward, became alarmed for the safety of Valencia and at once marched back there, reaching it in forty-eight hours.

Early in June Bentinck contemplated turning the line of the Jucar by marching on Cuenca so as to gain the Madrid road on Zaragoza where he would be able to get into touch with Wellington on the Ebro. But before this could be carried out the news arrived of the Battle of Vitoria and all was changed. The French at once abandoned Valencia and Bentinck occupied it. Suchet now decided to leave garrisons in Aragon and fall back on Zaragoza so as to join Clausel and marched by the coast road to Tortosa with 19,000 men. Meanwhile Clausel had, as we have seen, left Zaragoza and so Suchet directed his steps to Tarragona where he would be in touch with the troops in Catalonia.

APPENDIX I.

The "Light-armed Marksmen" of the North York Militia.

THERE has been a tradition that the North York Militia had a "Rifle Company in 1795" some years before the raising of the Rifle Corps. But, as on investigation it appeared that these Companies were dressed in green for only a brief period and were not armed with rifles for some ten years after they were raised, it did not seem to be a matter which demanded notice in my book on the "First British Rifle Corps" published in 1890.

The matter did not escape Fortescue who in his fourth volume describes how:—

"In 1795 a beginning was indeed made (of teaching light infantry work) by forming two Companies of marksmen in the North Riding Militia of York which were the first regular British riflemen ever seen in this country, but though they were dressed in green, they were neither selected, trained or properly accoutred for the work. In fact they were a mere parody on true light infantry and might just as well have been dressed in scarlet and armed with a musket."¹

When in 1909 I was charged with the compilation of this History I received letters on the subject of these so-called "Rifle Companies" of the North York Militia from officers who had served in that Corps and as it was plain that there was a genuine belief that these Companies were in a measure the precursors of the first Corps of British Riflemen, I went into the whole question most carefully. The results however did not seem to me necessary to embody in our Regimental History, nor did I think that, in view of Fortescue's account of the affair which I gave in Part I p. 15 of this History, further reference to it was necessary. Since Part I appeared however, I have been asked why I had made no mention of the North York Militia and this by people who evidently had accepted the tradition. In consequence I now give all the information I can on the subject that those interested may see what are the facts of the matter.

It appears that an officer who joined the North York Militia in 1759,

¹ Fortescue, vol. iv, p. 916.

by name William Allen (or Allan) of Richmond, Yorkshire, kept a diary from 1792 up to the year 1803, during which time the Battalion was embodied. From this diary Captain James Carter (who was adjutant of the Regiment from 1816 to 1852) wrote a history in MS. and this MS. was largely used in compiling the History of the North York Militia published in 1907.¹ From this work I have taken the following extracts.

In the Militia Letter Book, 24 July 1795, it is recorded that "an augmentation of two Companies, consisting of 168 light-armed marksmen was authorized and that 168 complete stand of arms were issued out of the Ordnance Stores."

These arms were no doubt muskets of a light pattern known as "fusils" which are mentioned in Chapter I of this volume on p. 14. It is further stated that "The clothing was at first green but was not of so dark a shade as that subsequently worn by the Rifle Brigade and the buttons were black."²

Later on it is recorded how "on 28 August 1795, the Duke of York reviewed the troops encamped on the coasts of Durham and Northumberland on Blyth Sands, 7,000 men. At the same time the Duke inspected a private in the clothing and appointments, which had been made in accordance with H.R.H.'s directions, for the light-armed Companies and approved both in every particular." Captain Carter with pardonable pride refers to a story that the founder of the Rifle Brigade was present as the Duke's A.D.C. and, "struck with the idea that such a body would be of great service to the Regular Army, got permission to form a Regiment to be clothed and accoutred in like manner" and he says that "from this conception sprang in 1799 the 95th, or, as it was afterwards called, the Rifle Brigade." How strong the new detachment was on 28 August is not mentioned but it is stated that on 1 August six men joined and by the 15th there were fifteen.

Later on it is noted that recruiting for these two Companies in the North York Militia began on 1 August 1795 and on 12 January 1796 was completed. The historian admits that there is no evidence of these Militiamen being armed with rifles and adds "not till ten years later (about 1805) can I find any reference to rifles being supplied them."

Such then is the story of the introduction of riflemen into the British Militia upon which has been built up the tradition which has been quoted and re-quoted, chiefly by non-military writers, to the effect that "the credit of

¹ By Robert Bell Turton, Major 4th (Militia) Batt. Yorkshire Regiment.

² Walker's *Costumes of Yorkshire* 1814 (plate showing two men).

having first worn the greenjacket and established riflemen in the British Service actually belongs to the North York Militia."

The story of the founder of the Rifle Brigade being present at the inspection on Blyth Sands on 28 August 1795 is obviously a mistake. The "founder" of the Rifle Corps, Coote Manningham, was given command of a Light Infantry Corps in the West Indies on 18 April 1794 and with it took part in the reduction of Martinique, St. Lucia and Guadaloupe. On 1 September 1795 he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in the 41st Regiment, also in the West Indies, and as Adjutant-General was severely wounded in the attack on San Domingo on 18 December 1795, and he did not return to England until 1798. In January of that year he was made A.D.C. to the King.

William Stewart (the organizer and trainer of the Corps) in 1795 was Adjutant-General to the troops under Major-General Doyle in the Quiberon Expedition. His MS. Diary of that operation (which I have seen) commences on 13 August 1795 and he notes that he "sailed from St. Helens on 31 August." Thus he could not possibly have been in Durham at the Duke of York's Inspection on 28 August 1795.

Hence, it is clear that whoever may have been the A.D.C. to the Duke of York that was so struck with the appearance of the "light-armed marksman" in the North York Militia in 1795, it most certainly was neither Coote Manningham nor William Stewart who were popularly viewed as the joint founders of the Rifle Corps.



TOMB OF THE FOUNDER OF THE INFANTRY
MAJOR-GENERAL GUSTAVUS BARRINGTON
(born 1750, died 1804)
AT LITTLE BOOKHAM, NEAR LEATHERHEAD, SURREY

History of the Rifle Brigade

...the greenjacket and established riflemen, in the British ... to the North York Militia."

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TOMB OF THE FOUNDER OF THE RIFLE CORPS
MAJOR-GENERAL COOTE MANNINGHAM
(born 1766, died 1809)
AT LITTLE BOOKHAM, NEAR LEATHERHEAD, SURREY.

APPENDIX II.

**The Tomb of the Founder of the Rifle Corps,
Major-General Coote Manningham.**

IN the last pages of Part I of this History a short account of the Services and death of Major-General Coote Manningham are given. He was buried at Little Bookham, a village about three miles south-west of Leatherhead.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Davies who was for many years Quartermaster of the 3rd Battalion visited the spot in 1912 and took the photographs from which the plates here given have been reproduced. He also wrote an interesting account of his visit which appeared in the "Chronicle" for 1912 (pp. 106-108) and from which this account is taken. The monument is about eleven feet high over all and is of soft crumbling stone, much weathered. The inscription on it is as follows:—

"IN THIS VAULT ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF
MAJOR-GENERAL COOTE MANNINGHAM, EQUERRY TO THE KING,
AND COLONEL OF THE 95TH, OR RIFLE REGIMENT ON FOOT :
THIS CORPS HE ORIGINALLY RAISED AND FORMED,
AND BY HIS UNWEARIED ZEAL AND EXERTION,
AS WELL AS EXCELLENT DISCIPLINE AND GOOD EXAMPLE, BROUGHT
TO THE HIGHEST STATE OF MILITARY REPUTATION AND DISTINCTION.
HE DIED AT *MAIDSTONE* ON THE 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1809,
IN THE 44TH YEAR OF HIS AGE,
AN EARLY VICTIM TO THE FATIGUES OF THE CAMPAIGN IN *SPAIN*
OPERATING ON A CONSTITUTION ALREADY ENFEEBLED
BY LONG SERVICE IN THE *WEST INDIES*
AND HONOURABLE WOUNDS RECEIVED IN THAT CLIMATE."

The general arrangements of the trophy of arms is as follows: The Officer's sash (as worn by all Officers holding the King's Commission at that period) is spread on the tomb with his sword laid across it.

Unfortunately the right lower portion of the Memorial is much weathered and the grip of the sword and most of the guard have disappeared. The sword-belt and sword-slings were apparently shown lying on top of the sash, as would be the case were an officer's sword and sash

laid upon a bier. The much-curved sword-blade can be traced passing below the ammunition pouch and beyond. The fringe at this end of the sash appears on the right of the sword, that of the other end can be traced protruding below the butt of the rifle on the opposite side, the sash itself is draped over the pommel of the sword-bayonet. Fortunately most of the remainder of the trophy is in good preservation and the arms and equipment of a Private Rifleman of the period are most accurately represented. The Baker rifle and sword-bayonet are crossed in the centre and apparently strapped together, whether by means of the rifle sling or waist-belt or a fold of the sash, it is hard to say. The straight Roman sword-bayonet with the stud on the scabbard which secured it to the "frog" is well shown. Peculiar interest attaches to the representation of the mallet used in the early days of the Rifle Corps for driving home the ball, the exact form of which has always been a matter for speculation. The peculiar "Bugle Horn" and the old powder horn are also well modelled. It is difficult to determine whether anything was placed in the centre above the point where the sword and rifle are crossed, but I am inclined to think that possibly a head dress was here displayed. This, however, is a matter for speculation as also is the article shown which half conceals the Bugle-horn, which may perhaps be a haversack.

In the North Transept of Westminster Abbey, so high up as to be almost undecipherable, is a plain brass tablet in memory of the Founder which ran as follows:—

"Sacred to the memory of Major-General Coote Manningham, Colonel of the 95th or Rifle Regiment of Infantry and Equerry to the King.

"In testimony of a friendship which, commenced in early youth, was matured and confirmed by time, remains unchilled by death, and humbly looks for a reunion in Eternity.

"The distinguished soldier to whom friendship erects this inadequate memorial began his career of military action at the Siege of Gibraltar and concluded it at the victory of Corunna, to which his skill and gallantry conspicuously contributed; he fell an early victim to the vicissitudes of climate and the severities of war, and died the 26 August 1809 aged 44.

"Yet, reader, regard not his fate as premature since his cup of glory was full, and he was not summoned till his virtue and patriotism had achieved, even here, a brilliant recompense, for his name is engraven on the annals of his country.

"In him the man and the Christian tempered the warrior and England might proudly present him to the world as a model of the British soldier."

This memorial was placed in the Abbey in 1813, by his friend Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Hislop.¹

¹ Cope, p. 41.

- 7 HEAD-DRESS (T)
8 WALLET
9 POWDER-HORN

- 10 AMMUNITION POUCH
11 FRINGE OF SASH
12 OFFICER'S SWORD

- 11 FRINGE OF SASH

- 9 POWDER-HORN

- 12 OFFICER'S SWORD

laid upon a bier. The much-curved sword-blade can be traced passing below the ammunition pouch and beyond. The fringe at this end of the sash appears on the right of the sword, that of the other end can be traced protruding below the butt of the rifle on the opposite side, the sash itself is draped over the pommel of the sword-bayonet. Fortunately most of the remainder of the trophies is in good preservation and the arms and equipment of a Private Rifleman of the period are most accurately represented. The Rifle rifle and sword-bayonet are crossed in the centre and apparently secured together, whether by means of the rifle sling or waist-belt or a strap of the sash it is hard to say. The straight Roman sword-bayonet with its scabbard which secured it to the "frog" is well shown. Peculiar interest attaches to the representation of the mallet used in the early days of the Rifle Corps for driving home the ball, the exact form of which has always been a matter for speculation. The peculiar "Bugle Horn" and the old powder horn are also well modelled. It is difficult to determine whether anything was placed in the centre above the point where the sword and rifle are crossed, but I am inclined to think that possibly a head dress was here displayed. This, however, is a matter for speculation as also is the article shown which half conceals the Bugle-horn which may perhaps be a haversack.

In the North Transept of Westminster Abbey, so high up as to be almost unobtainable, is a plain brass tablet in memory of the Founder

of the Rifle Corps, Major-General Cooke Manningham, Colonel of the 95th Regiment of Infantry and Equerry to the King.

A testimony of a friendship which commenced in early youth, was matured and strengthened by time, remains unchilled by death, and humbly looks for a reunion in Eternity.

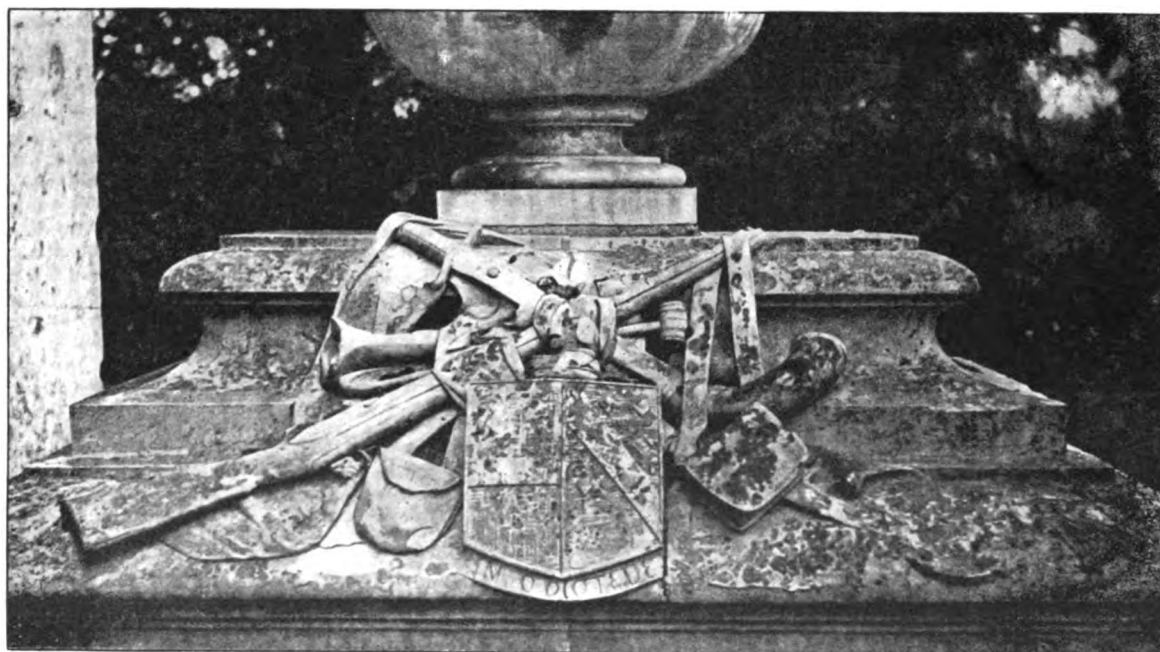
The distinguished soldier to whom friendship erects this inadequate memorial began his career of military action at the Siege of Gibraltar and concluded it at the victory of Corunna, to which his skill and gallantry conspicuously contributed; he fell an early victim to the vicissitudes of climate and the severities of war, and died the 26 August 1809 aged 44.

"Yet, reader, regard not his fate as premature since his cup of glory was full, and he was not summoned till his virtue and patriotism had achieved, even here, a brilliant recompense, for his name is engraven on the annals of his country.

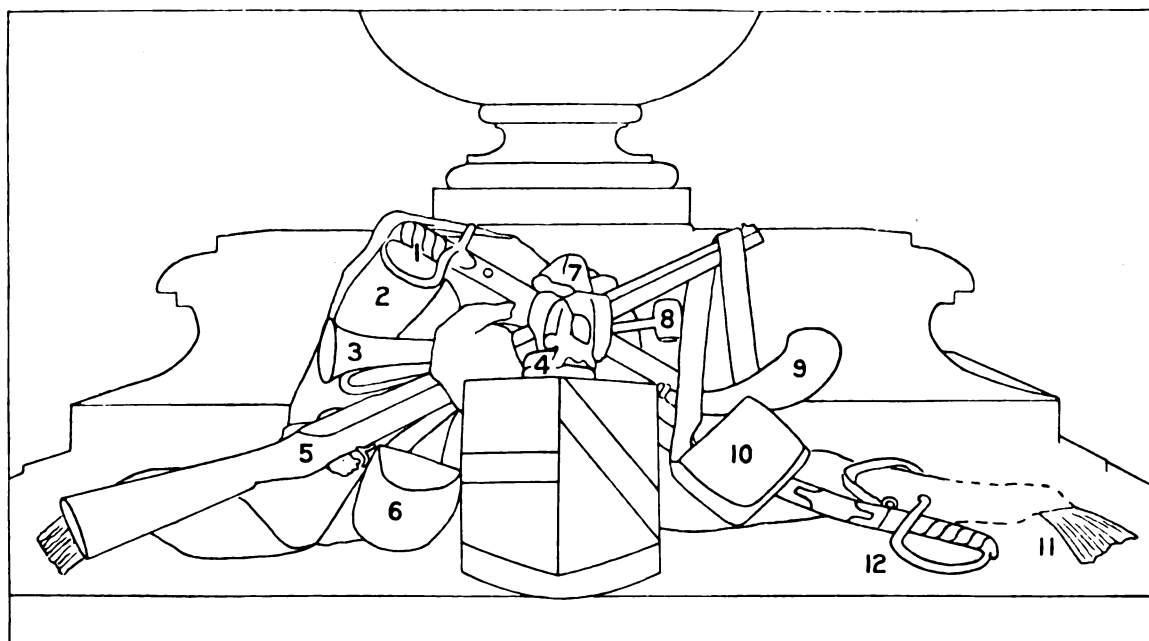
"In him the man and the Christian tempered the warrior and England might proudly present him to the world as a model of the British soldier."

This memorial was placed in the Abbey in 1813, by his friend Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Hislop.¹

¹ Cope, p. 41.



**TROPHY OF RIFLEMEN'S ARMS AND EQUIPMENT
ON TOMB OF THE FOUNDER OF THE RIFLE CORPS.**



KEY TO PLATE.

1 SWORD-BAYONET
2 OFFICER'S SASH
3 BUGLE HORN

4 MESS-TIN
5 BAKER RIFLE
6 BALL-BAG

7 HEAD-DRESS (?)
8 MALLET
9 POWDER-HORN

10 AMMUNITION POUCH
11 FRINGE OF SASH
12 OFFICER'S SWORD

APPENDIX III.

The Forced March on Talavera.

IN the story of the Forced March it has been shown how the actual distance covered was but little over thirty-eight miles in a direct line and was probably under forty-two miles of marching, or if the advance across the field of Talavera to the most extreme point taken up by the outposts of the Light Brigade be accepted as the actual termination of the march, at the most forty-seven miles.

Such being the case the question naturally arises: how has it become an almost universally accepted belief that "The Light Division covered sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours?"

Unquestionably the great military historian Sir William Napier is responsible for this extraordinary error, for error it certainly is, and successive writers during the last fifty years have been perplexed to account for so remarkable a blunder in the writings of one who, as a general rule was fairly accurate.

Naturally in an assertion of the length and duration of a march made under such trying conditions the opinions and beliefs of those engaged upon it might differ widely. Nor was there in those days means of checking by measurement from accurate maps the distances actually covered. The result is that officers in the same Brigade and even those in the same Regiment have recorded in their journals and notes hours of marching and of distances covered which are hopelessly irreconcilable. Even in instances where diaries or accounts written by different individuals agree, it by no means follows that such evidence may be viewed as confirmatory since many writers probably accepted and recorded the general opinion on the subject.

So much for the times and distances given in contemporary writings. In the great mass of personal reminiscences of the Peninsular War written subsequent to the appearance of Napier's famous history, it is a common thing to come across passages taken from that writer; thus, as in the case of the "sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours," perpetuating any error of Napier's. It is notorious that many of the writers after 1829 drew their

information from Napier and embodied his statements in their text, often without acknowledgment or reference. So far as I am aware, the first person to prove that Napier's story was incorrect was Sir John Bell formerly of the 52nd, who served in the Light Division and about 1864 had a controversy with Sir James Shaw Kennedy who had been Craufurd's A.D.C. at the time of the march and who maintained the accuracy of Napier's statement. But comparatively few people have heard of Sir John Bell's letters, and Napier's History held the field for years and was implicitly believed alike by the Army and the great mass of military readers. In 1873 Major Colley (afterwards Major-General Sir George Colley who fell at Majuba in 1881) ventured to point out in a lecture he gave at the Staff College that the records of all famous forced marches were commonly exaggerated and cited Craufurd's forced march to Talavera as an example of this. Apparently this statement of fact drew some severe criticisms on the lecturer, for in the *Times* of 1873 there appeared a letter from Colley dated 5 June from the Staff College, in which he proved to the satisfaction of all competent persons that the distance was *not more than* forty-two miles, presumably to the field of battle.

When looking through some of the late Sir William Cope's Rifle Brigade papers at Bramshill for the purpose of this History, twenty years after Sir William's death and close upon forty years since Colley's letter appeared in the *Times* I found a cutting of it from that paper used as a book-marker in Wellington's Despatches for 1 August 1809. It was quite clear that Sir William, who was well aware of Colley's letter, had declined to accept it for in his History published several years later he stated that the distance was "upwards of fifty miles." When in 1890 I compiled the first volume of the RIFLE BRIGADE CHRONICLE I adopted Cope's version and embodied it in the Regimental Calendar.

In 1893 the letters and journals of Major George Simmons of the 95th Rifles were placed in my hands and I noticed that, whereas in his journal Simmons recorded the classic "sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours," in a letter to his parents written from Castello Branco in September, a *few weeks after* the march, he says, "twenty-four hours in which time we marched fifty-two miles."¹ Naturally this set me thinking, for it showed that even among those who took part in the march there were doubts as to its actual length only a few weeks after the event. But it is no easy thing to break down tradition in the British Army and so it was that, failing a definite decision

¹ "A British Rifle Man," p. 31.

on the subject, I reverted in subsequent issues of the *CHRONICLE* to the popularly accepted "sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours" although it was clear to me that the subject required investigation and correction. When finally in 1909 I was charged with the task of re-writing the History of the Regiment I set to work to collect the various notes and extracts from Diaries of old Light Division officers so as to settle the point at issue once and for all to the satisfaction of the Regiment and I trust to the Army at large. It was then that I ventured to modify Napier's "sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours" to the more modest "forty-five miles in twenty-five hours." This first appeared in the *CHRONICLE* for 1912 and now that I have been able to investigate thoroughly the whole difficult problem I have felt compelled to amend it still further, as has been seen. It must be remembered that when Sir William Cope wrote his History (published in 1877) he elected to describe the march as one of "upwards of fifty miles in twenty-five hours," this, after a full examination of all available journals and, of far more importance, after having discussed the matter with officers who had actually taken part in the famous march. Such evidence was obviously not of a sort to set lightly aside. But Sir William had told me that he had never had an opportunity to measure the distances off a good large-scale map.

All who have studied the Peninsular War are well acquainted with Colonel Jonathan Leach's "Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier." Now it has been my extreme good fortune to have placed at my disposal all Leach's *original* journals written during the war and posted home to his relations from time to time. These invaluable materials so far as I am aware have never been used previously by those engaged in recounting the deeds of the Light Division and they contain a mass of information and detail which Leach when writing his "Rough Sketches" in 1831 was naturally compelled to condense considerably or thought advisable to omit altogether.

It may be of interest to quote here a few of the times and distances recorded in some of these journals and in subsequent writings. These are shown in tabular form on the next page.

It is no easy matter to reconcile the figures there given yet when they are carefully considered it is not impossible to detect where the errors have crept in.

To begin with, I think all military men will agree that Leach's entry as to the hour of the start must be a slip. Likely enough it is the hour when the "Rouse" was sounded off. Leach in his *Rough Sketches*, p. 83 says they marched "before day dawned."

History of the Rifle Brigade

THE FORCED MARCH OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

	Name of authority	Time of departure. Navalmoral, 28 July	Time of arrival. Field of Talavera, 29 July	Hours on the march	Distance in English statute miles
1	J. Leach, Capt. 95th Rifles (MS. Journal)	2 a.m.	7 a.m.	—	52
2	Ditto, ditto, "Rough Sketches," p. 83	"Before day dawned"	—	24	"Over 50"
3	G. Simmons, Lieut. 95th Rifles (MS. Journal)	"Very early"	"Early"	26	62
4	Ditto, ditto (Letter to Parents written in September 1809)	—	—	24	52
5	John Cox, Lieut. 95th Rifles (MS. Journal)	"Daylight"	"Early"	25	56
6	Sir H. Smith, Autobiography	—	"Daylight"	28	56
7	W. Green, Bugler 95th Rifles...	—	6 a.m.	—	—
8	Sir William Cope's History ...	"Daylight"	"Early"	25	"Over 50"
9	Sir W. Napier's History ...	—	—	26	62
10	Capt. Moorsom, 52nd History	—	"By sunrise"	26	52
11	J. Fortescue, vii, p. 265 ...	"Before dawn"	—	25	"45 to 50"
12	C. Oman ...	—	6 a.m.	22	43

That the Light Brigade actually marched off much before daylight is most improbable. Sir William Cope and Lieut. John Cox both say "daylight" which at the end of July in the south of Castile when sunrise is at 5.10 a.m. may be taken as not before 4 a.m. and everything seems to point to the actual hour when the Brigade did move off as being about 4 a.m.

Then as to the time of arrival on the Field of Talavera. The actual point where the advancing column first viewed the stricken field to their front may reasonably be assumed to be the southern slope of the Cerro de Medellin, since the broad country track from Oropesa, which the Light Brigade apparently followed, leads directly to that point. Now Leach says they "joined the British Army" at 7 a.m., others say they "arrived" at 6 and others "early." If we accept 6 a.m. we get the interval of time "twenty-six hours of marching" (including halts) which is given by most of those present.

It will no doubt have struck many who read this account that the simplest way to arrive at a correct calculation of the distance marched would be by measurement from a map. Of course it is essential for such a purpose that the map should be based on an accurate survey and that it should be drawn on a sufficiently large scale to ensure the correct measurements of the distances. Here was the difficulty, for the Spanish maps of 1797,¹ although

¹I have examined two of these lent to me by Lieut.-Colonel Hew D. Ross of the Rifle Brigade which formerly belonged to his grandfather, General Sir Hew Ross, the Commander of the Chestnut Troop, Royal Horse Artillery with the Light Division.

drawn on a large scale (about five miles to one inch) are most inaccurate whilst the English map (Jasper Nantiat's, compiled in 1810), whilst probably based on work of doubtful accuracy is on too small a scale for the purpose, being about fourteen miles to an inch.

The largest accurate Spanish maps of the district is the *mapa itinerario de España* issued by the *Obras públicas* and is on a scale of 1 to 400,000 (or about six miles to an inch) and from this I was able to measure the distances between Navalморal and Talavera with all reasonable accuracy. Still I was not satisfied, since this map only gives the roads and the watercourses and omits all hill features. Happily in 1914 the Royal Geographical Society obtained some sheets of the new Spanish survey of Spain on a scale of 1 to 50,000 or about one and a quarter miles to an inch published by the *Instituto Geográfico y Estadístico*. This map besides being contoured gives most minute details alike of the high roads of recent construction and of the old *cañadas* and *caminos*, (the cross-country routes along which pack animals travel and cattle were, and are, driven) as well as of all the tracks connecting minor points which most assuredly were those used by our troops on the march a century ago. The sheets of these new series are by no means complete, but I was fortunate to find those which include the portion of the road from Oropesa to Talavera and the Alberche beyond, by means of which I could follow out almost every yard of the final part of the Forced March. Briefly the route taken from Oropesa was along one of these wide tracks, a *cañada de ganados*, i.e., "route of the herds." At a point about fifteen miles from Oropesa, a good wide track diverges half-left, marked on the map "*cañada de merinos*" (sheep's track) which leads for about six miles directly to a knoll marked "460"¹ on the Cerro de Medellín just two and a half miles due north of the town of Talavera.

It was on this knoll that Stewart's Brigade fought and from a close study of the map it is probable that a Brigade marching from Oropesa to the field of Talavera followed the route as above described and reached the battlefield about a mile to the south of it where the British right stood.² Throughout the whole portion of this march the track is across gently undulating ground and crosses no less than nineteen *arroyos* or dry water-

¹ i.e., 460 metros above the sea level at Alicante.

² Simmons describes meeting "wounded British officers riding from the scene of action" (p. 31). It is highly improbable that these officers and the crowd of fugitives retreated *via* Talavera in preference to the *direct* route to the rear, viz., that leading to Oropesa.

courses and measures just under twenty-one miles. From Navalmoral to Oropesa, measured off the map, is just twenty-one miles. Thus we get the *total length* of the famous forced march to be not more than *forty-two* miles to the ridge held by Wellington during the battle, or reckoning the four to five miles across the battlefield to the Alberche, between forty-six and forty-seven miles. It has taken me many years to collect all the data I have consulted bearing on this subject and many months to compile this Appendix and I feel confident that all who take sufficient interest in the matter to examine it critically and to study the new Spanish maps will come to the same conclusions as I have.

It remains now to explain how Napier misled the whole world for many years by his amazing statement. Here I differ entirely from those who ascribe his mistake to a "slip" or incorrect information and I think all who read this will admit the justice of my assertion that the principal cause of Napier's error was owing to his having based his calculations on an incorrect value of the Spanish league. In Spain as most people know there are several leagues, all differing in length. After consulting many maps and authorities I have come across the four following Spanish leagues which were in use during the first part of the nineteenth century. At present the only officially recognized league is the "kilometric league"; since however it was not adopted in Spain until the year 1849, we need not consider it here.

From the following table it will be seen that Spanish maps of 1797 and for over fifty years later gave No. 1 the Castilian league of between $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{3}{4}$ English miles. Then came No. 2 the "legal league" or "maritime league" so called, which was styled "*una hora de camino*" i.e., "one hour's journey" and was equivalent to about $3\frac{1}{2}$ English miles. No. 3 the "geographical league" was styled "*del camino real*" i.e. along "the royal road" or "the King's highway" and was equivalent to 4 English miles. Lastly came No. 4 the "Spanish league" of about $4\frac{1}{4}$ English miles. It may be remarked that Leach, in his tables of distances, notes "Spanish and Portuguese leagues are from 4 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ English miles." From this it will be seen that Leach started on a wrong assumption for it is clear that the leagues were from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{4}$ miles and not as he imagined.

Appendix III

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TABLE OF SPANISH LEAGUES IN USE BETWEEN 1800 AND 1850.

No.	Name of League	Equivalent in Spanish		Authority. Maps of the Provinces	Equivalent in English statute miles
		<i>Piés</i>	<i>Varas</i>		
1	" <i>Legales castellanas</i> " (26½ to a Degree)	15,000	5,000	Lopez, 1797 Nantiat, 1810 Coello, 1849	2·63
2	" <i>Legales, una hora de camino</i> " (20 to a Degree) (maritime leagues)	20,000 (19,961·52)	6,626	Lopez, 1797 Coello, 1849	
3	" <i>Géograficas</i> " (17½ to a Degree) " <i>de camino real</i> "	(22,813·16)	7,572	Lopez, 1797 Nantiat, 1810 Coello, 1849	4·00 ¹
4	" <i>De España</i> "	24,000	8,000	Coello, 1849	

¹ The rough mean between the value of the *piés* and *varas* given is actually 7038·06 yards. This has been taken as 7040 yards. It will be remarked that the relative value of 1 *vara* = 3 *piés* is not always adhered to by the above quoted authorities.

First as to the number of leagues marched. It is significant that Wellington in his Talavera Despatches particularly mentioned that Craufurd's march was one of "12 leagues." It is more than probable that Wellington, who was naturally principally concerned in calculating the distances to be marched by his own troops and those of his Spanish Allies, should have been correct in his statements, and the measurement of the best map then in existence made the distance from Navalmoral to Talavera to be 12 "legal" leagues. Now 12 of these leagues (No. 2 on the table) measure just under 42 *miles*¹ which as we have seen is the actual distance as verified by me on the most recent large scale maps of the Spanish Survey.

Napier therefore was not only incorrect in saying the march was one of "15 leagues," but he made another most unfortunate error when he converted these leagues into "62 miles." That he did so owing to the confusion caused by the various Spanish leagues is very probable. Further that the league he chose was the Spanish league of 4·21 miles (No. 4) is equally probable, since 15 leagues of No. 4 are about 63 miles.

¹ Exactly 41·88 miles.

Turning now to Leach's calculations. It must be remembered that Leach made the march (which *Napier did not*). Leach asserts it to have been one of "13 leagues" or 52 miles showing that he elected to take his leagues as "geographical" (No. 3) of 4 miles. In all probability he arrived at his number of leagues for the simple reason that men marching through a new country under adverse conditions almost invariably over-estimate all distances.

It may interest some to know that if the actual length of the Spanish league was nebulous a century ago it is really very little better nowadays, as all who have travelled in Spain by cross-country tracks and paths can testify. To the mass of country-folk in Spain distance is an abstract quantity, since it is not the distance "as the crow flies" but the number of hours a journey takes which affects them and their movements.

From my expeditions through the wilder parts of Spain I can testify to the absolute impossibility of making an accurate forecast of the length of a prospective journey from the muleteers' estimate, based as it usually is on their favourite formula of so many "short leagues" or "long leagues" which league, being interpreted, may mean anything between three-quarters of an hour and an hour and a half's journey.

From time to time in my study of old diaries and books dealing with marches and travel in Spain and Portugal I have come across most convincing proofs of serious errors as to distances traversed. I cannot do better than give an example of this, which so far as I am aware, unlike the much queried distance of "the Forced March on Talavera," has hitherto been accepted and quoted and re-quoted by all writers on the War as an example of marvellous endurance. This is none other than the ride right across Spain from Aragon to Coruña made by Sir Charles Vaughan the diplomatist. It will be recalled that, when Sir John Moore was at Salamanca, he on 28 November 1808 received the news of Castaños's defeat near Tudela on the Ebro.¹ How he obtained the information is a matter of extreme interest which I shall now describe.

Vaughan was at the front with Palafox in 1808 and, having left the Army of Aragon only the day before the battle of Tudela, upon hearing of the disaster from fugitives he rode straight to Madrid with the news. It was a daring venture for he had to cross the front of Ney's cavalry at Agreda. From Madrid he pushed on to Salamanca and then after reporting to Sir

¹ Part I, p. 176.

John Moore rode on to Coruña with despatches. Oman describes this marvellous feat thus : "he had ridden straight from Tudela to Madrid and from Madrid to Salamanca, 476 miles in 6 days" and in a note summarizes the whole ride to Coruña thus : "the ride was really one of 790 miles in 9 days." Vaughan himself wrote : "I have ridden 790 miles from Caparrosa to Coruña in eleven days (21 Nov.—2 Dec.). I had a night's rest at Agreda, Cetina and Salamanca and two at Madrid."¹

Fortescue quotes Oman's account and accepts Vaughan's figures but in a note points out that, marvellous as was this performance, it was eclipsed by Sir Harry Smith's famous ride of 600 miles in six days from Cape Town to Grahamstown.²

I confess that when I first read Oman's account I was somewhat puzzled, since, as the whole Peninsula only measures some 500 miles by 600 miles, it was not easy to ride a point-to-point race for 790 miles even by making the most generous allowance for a deviation *via* Madrid and Salamanca.

Naturally I consulted the nearest available map of Spain and found sure enough that the whole distance was between 590 and 600 miles! Of course this was only an approximate measurement owing to the smallness of scale of the map. Subsequently I most carefully measured the distances on the Spanish maps of the Provinces, which are on a scale of 1,400,000. From these I found the distance, making the fullest allowance for turns, &c., to be only 595 miles. Finally I verified several distances on the newest sheets of the Spanish Survey on a scale of 1,200,000, and found that they gave exactly similar results. In every case I followed out the route as described in Vaughan's papers and with the following results :

				Vaughan's (estimated) Miles		Map (measured) Miles
Caparrosa to Salamanca	...	...	...	476	...	328
Salamanca to Coruña	...	...	...	314	...	267
				<hr/> 790 <hr/>		<hr/> 595 <hr/>

My own solution of this extraordinary discrepancy is as follows and is to be found in Vaughan's own diaries where he records that the distance he rode was "188 leagues." If these 188 leagues be given the value of

¹ Oman vol. i, p. 508 *note*.

² Fortescue, vol. vi, p. 311 *note* ; also "Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith," vol. ii, pp. 11-17.

Spanish leagues (No. 4) of 4·21 miles we get a distance of 791·48 English Statute miles which closely approximates to Vaughan's asserted "790 miles." But to me it is clear that Vaughan was as absolutely at fault in his assertion that he had ridden 188 leagues as he was in their conversion into English miles. For the map shows that he had ridden only 595 miles, which is equivalent to $226\frac{1}{4}$ "Castilian leagues" (No. 1) of 2·63 English Statute miles. If now these $226\frac{1}{4}$ leagues be given the value of "legal leagues" (No. 2) of 3·49 English miles we get a distance of 790 miles! It will be found by working out a simple Rule of Three sum, that the ratio of 2·63 to 3·49 is almost *exactly* the same as that of 595 to 790.

The coincidence is at any rate very extraordinary and it will be noted that there is a most remarkable similarity between the over-reckoning of Vaughan's march and that of the much disputed "Forced March of the Light Brigade."¹

NOTE.

The preceding account of the Forced March was written by me in 1913-14 and was verified from the most recent large scale maps at the Royal Geographical Society in 1914 and 1915 and sent to the printers at the end of 1915, at which time the map showing the Forced March of the Light Brigade was also printed. Some six months later, Mr. Oman published an Article in the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* in which he gave a most important letter from General Sir John Bell G.C.B. written to Captain Moorsom, the Historian of the 52nd Light Infantry, on 8 May 1860 containing details of the famous March in which Bell had taken part as an officer in the 52nd, and pointing out that Napier's "62 miles in 26 hours" was wrong. I much regret that I did not see this letter at the time I compiled my account. Still it is very gratifying to me to find that Sir John Bell's account almost entirely confirms the main points of my own conclusions, as recorded in this History.

Sir John Bell describes the March as follows "On the morning of the 28th at the usual hour, I think 3 a.m., we marched for Oropesa. The distance was considerable and the day very hot, so I think we could hardly have arrived before 11 o'clock. The Brigade cooked and rested for about

¹ Those addicted to arithmetical calculations are invited to work out the preceding problems on the basis that one degree of latitude contains $26\frac{1}{4}$ "Castilian" leagues (No. 1) or 20 "legal" leagues (No. 2).

four hours and resumed its march. We halted for about two hours in the night near a very muddy pool, started again and reached the right of the battlefield *shortly after sunrise*. . . . I never could make out that the March exceeded 52 miles at the utmost, and Arrowsmith's map has now pretty well satisfied me that 48 would be nearer the mark. (Even this is too high a figure.) The mere length of the March was not so remarkable as the splendid style in which the men did their work—arriving, as they did, at its close, fresh as if they had only done an ordinary day's march and ready for anything."

It will be remarked that Sir John is not at all *certain* of the hours of start or arrival at Oropesa, but it is obviously of no great importance whether the actual start was at 3 or 4 a.m. or whether the arrival at Oropesa was at 11 or 12. Where Sir John differs from other accounts is in the hour that the Brigade left Oropesa, which, according to his date, was about 3 p.m. not 5 p.m., whilst he makes the halt in the middle of the night to be only two hours, whilst others say four hours. The net result however is to make the hour of the arrival of the Light Brigade on the Field of Talavera at about 5.30 a.m. ("shortly after sunrise") instead of 6 a.m. as shown on the sketch-map. His statement that the Light Brigade reached "the right of battlefield" is of interest. It may mean the right of the ground held by Wellington, (not far from the point "460" on the map) or the right of Cuesta's Army, a mile to the south, but from a study of the large scale contoured map it seems that most probably the line of advance was much as I have shown it. Anyway the difference between the distances marched to either point is negligible. The point in the letter which however is most gratifying is Sir John's tribute to "the splendid style in which the men did their work" which fully bears out my description of the March on p. 74 of this volume.

The result of Sir John Bell's letter was that Captain Moorsom accepted entirely his corrections and at once incorporated them in the second Edition of his History which was published *the same year* as the first Edition (namely in 1860). The 52nd record of the famous March therefore stands as "52 miles in 26 hours" which is much the same as that given by Leach in his M.S. Journal and by Simmons in his letter to his parents written in September 1809.

Most unfortunately, Mr. Oman was unaware of the existence of this second Edition and so in the Article in which he gave Sir John Bell's letter, proceeded to make a severe attack on Captain Moorsom whom he accused

of having "rejected Bell's very clear and lucid proof" and charged him with having made an "intentional obscurity of the dates." Lieutenant-Colonel H. M. Moorsom (formerly of the Rifle Brigade, a son of Captain Moorson), naturally entered a vigorous protest against this most unjust attack on his father's memory.

Mr. Oman, of course, upon finding what a very serious mistake he had made, wrote to the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* and expressed his regret. Since however in years to come many will read his article in the *Journal* of May 1916 and few will see the letter withdrawing his statements, signed "G. O.," which appeared at the end of the *Journal* for August some months afterwards, it is necessary to place on record here the true facts of the case, where they will be accessible to any student of Military History and are of especial importance to all interested in the story of the Light Division.

REGULATION HEAVY-MARCHING ORDER KIT, CARRIED BY RIFLEMEN AT THE
TIME OF THE FORCED MARCH ON TALAVERA.

Edward Costello who as a Private Rifleman took part in the Forced March has left us the following inventory of the regulation kit ordered to be carried on that memorable occasion by every N.C.O. and man in the ranks. It must be remembered that they had only just landed in the country and that the reign of pipe-clay (or its Rifleman's equivalent) was in full swing :—

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 knapsack and straps. | 1 great coat. |
| 2 shirts. | 1 blanket. |
| 2 pair of stockings. | 1 powder flask, (filled). |
| 1 pair of shoes. | 1 ball-bag containing 30 loose balls. |
| 1 pair of spare soles and heels. | 1 small mallet (to hammer ball into muzzle of the rifle). |
| 3 brushes. | 1 belt and pouch containing 50 rounds of ammunition. |
| 1 box of blacking. | 1 sword-belt and sword. |
| 1 razor, 1 soap box and strop. | 1 rifle. |
| 1 extra pair of trowsers. | "Also sundries at all times required by a Service soldier." |
| 1 mess-tin, centre-tin and lid. | |
| 1 haversack. | |
| 1 canteen (used as a water-bottle). | |

Each squad had also to carry four billhooks weighing 6 lb. apiece and, as a squad consisted of eight men, "every other day each man had to carry one." The total weight of the above came to from 70 lb. to 80 lb. In addition General Craufurd ordered each man to have his canteen filled with water before marching off of a morning, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. more. Costello adds "I don't think there was man in the Regiment five years after, before we left the country, who could show a single shirt or a pair of shoes in his knapsack!"¹

¹ Costello, *Memoirs* p. 20.

APPENDIX IV.

Some Notes on Major-General Robert Craufurd.

ROBERT CRAUFURD was the third son of Sir Alexander C. Craufurd, Bart., of Newark Castle, Ayrshire, N.B., and was born 5 May 1764. When in his sixteenth year he was gazetted on 6 May 1780, Ensign in the 65th Foot and in the same Gazette was transferred to the 26th Foot. On 24 February 1781 he was promoted to a Lieutenancy in the 98th Foot and was transferred back to the 26th Foot on 7 March. On 11 December 1782 he was promoted Captain in the 92nd Foot and was gazetted Captain and Captain-Lieutenant in the 45th Foot on 19 March 1783, in which rank he appears in the Army Lists of 1784 and 1785. On 22 March 1783 he was transferred to a half-pay Company in the 101st Foot and, upon that Regiment being reduced in 1787, was placed on half-pay. On 6 October 1787 being then in his 24th year he was gazetted "from the half-pay of the late 101st" to a Company in the 33rd Foot and less than a month later, on 1 November, was transferred to the 75th Foot, then newly raised. In the Army List of 1788 he is shown as the senior Captain of the 75th Foot (now the 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders). Here we must leave him for the present and describe, as far as is possible, what he was doing during those seven years of kaleidoscopic change.

His own history would seem to be as follows : He served with the 26th, off and on, from the summer of 1780 till the end of 1782, about two and a half years, and, soon after being promoted to Captain, he went on half-pay. He was now nearly nineteen years of age, when many young fellows of the present day are joining Sandhurst. During the summer of 1783 he went abroad to study military art. The *Royal Military Chronicle* gives full details how, "for over three entire years," he was in Germany, wintering at Madgeburg, at Dresden, and at Strasburg, where he learnt languages, engineering and artillery, became a complete military draughtsman, and studied strategy and military history. He returned to England in 1787. It can be easily imagined that an officer with so thorough a military education was very rare in the British Army in those days, and it is highly

probable that the knowledge he possessed did not make him very tolerant of the mass of uneducated officers around him, and in later years may have accounted for his bitterness at seeing them steadily promoted over him, an early example of "the conspiracy of mediocrity" under which so many of the best men in our Army have suffered in their time.

And now, at last, he got an opening and was not slow to make the most of it. The 75th Foot was being raised in 1787, when he at the age of twenty-three and a half years found himself "eldest Captain" of it (as the senior was then called). Both field officers were at the time employed on the Staff, and in consequence he got command of the regiment from the day it was raised. Very shortly it was sent out to India, and it was here that "he formed it very soon in so perfect a manner as to draw upon himself the highest commendation. He then commanded the 75th in the Field under Lord Cornwallis with great distinction during two campaigns."

Now comes the time when Craufurd, according to some of his chroniclers, "went on half-pay." This has been the starting point for much misconception. The following proves that when he left the 75th in India he *retired altogether* from the Service: *London Gazette*, 9 August 1794. "75th Regiment of Foot, Lieutenant Adam Davies to be captain of a company by purchase, vice Craufurd, who retires."

As a result of his retirement his name disappears altogether from the Annual Army Lists of 1795, 1796 and 1797. How soon he relinquished his employment in India is not known, but he was back in Europe again in 1795, for in that year he accompanied his elder brother Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Craufurd (who had been appointed a Special Commissioner with H.R.H. the Archduke Charles of Austria) during the campaigns in Italy and Germany. In the *London Gazette* of 6 August and again in that of 14 August 1796 are "Despatches received by the Rt. Hon. Lord Grenville, H.M. Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs," describing the Austrian operations, signed "C. Craufurd." The next despatch is from Lauffen, dated 27 August 1796 and is signed "Robert Craufurd"; in it he reports that "Lt.-Colonel Craufurd (my brother) was unfortunately wounded and taken on 25 August," and adds that "in case of absence Captain Anstruther of the Guards will do my work." It is noteworthy that in this *London Gazette* he is described as "Robert Craufurd, Esquire," and he is not given his Military title. On 4 September a despatch was received from Captain Robert Anstruther, whilst the two

following despatches, dated 25 and 27 October respectively, are shown in the *Gazette* as from "Robert Craufurd, Esquire." On 23, 27 and 28 November Craufurd writes from "H.Q. of H.R.H. the Archduke at Offenburg." After this his name no longer appears, the despatches from April 1797 onward being from "Colonel Graham."

When Craufurd returned from India a number of foreign corps were being raised on the Continent and taken into British service. Among these corps were two raised by Baron Ferdinand de Hompesch known as "Hompesch's Regiment of Hussars," and "Hompesch's Light Infantry or Chasseurs." Craufurd joined the Chasseurs somewhere about 1795-1796. I have been unable to ascertain the exact date, since appointments to Commissions in these Corps prior to their being placed on the British establishment were not published in the *London Gazette*. He had been as we have seen a Captain in the British Army and he was now made a Lieutenant-Colonel in Hompesch's Regiment, for in the *London Gazette* of 23 January 1798 we find Lieut.-Colonel Robert Craufurd gazetted to a Lieut.-Colonelcy in the 60th Regiment of Foot "from Hompesch's Regiment." As a matter of fact although gazetted and although his name appears in the Annual Army Lists of 1798, 1800, 1801 and 1802 as in the 60th he was never posted to any Battalion of that Regiment during the whole time, nor did he ever join that Corps at all as the Muster Rolls and Pay-Lists for the years 1798-1802 conclusively prove. Throughout all this time he was on the Staff or in Parliament and was in excess of the Regimental establishment, as a "2nd Lieutenant-Colonel."

A miniature of Craufurd in the uniform of Hompesch—a green coat with red collar and white buttons—is in existence. This miniature is undated but in the opinion of his grandsons, Mr. H. R. Craufurd and the late Rev. Alexander Craufurd, must have been painted "about 1796." Reproductions from this miniature as well as from another of Craufurd in Staff uniform, which in the opinion of the same critics was painted "about 1805," appeared in Part I of this book. I may mention that before the fact was known that Craufurd had belonged to Hompesch's Regiment, the idea was that the miniature in green represented him in the uniform of the 5th Battalion 60th, in which it was erroneously believed that he had served.

All who have studied Craufurd's temperament, as shown by his conduct on many occasions and from his letters to Wellington and to others, can readily perceive that in getting a commission in Hompesch's Regiment he was simply manœuvring with a view to regain his position in the Army, and

thus be eligible for employment suited to his military knowledge and wide experience. He was now thirty-four years of age, and as we have seen, had commanded a battalion with ability on service, and was thoroughly versed in every branch of military art. It is very clear that he was a man of great character and determination and thoroughly aware of his own capabilities, and was not likely to hide his light from the world, and so lost no time in pressing his claims for Staff employment. The serious condition of affairs in Ireland gave him the needed opportunity and circumstances were all in his favour. For his old chief in India, Lord Cornwallis, almost at once got him appointed Deputy-Quarter-Master-General to the Forces in Ireland. On 16 February 1798 he took up his new duties.

On 25 April General Lake was appointed Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. A month later, on 24 May, the Rebellion broke out, and our motley forces, Regulars, Fencibles, Militia, Yeomanry, Volunteers, and some foreign troops, took the field. On 21 June the rebels were defeated at Vinegar Hill, and the bands of fugitives were pursued and broken up in all directions. In all accounts of these operations Craufurd's name repeatedly occurs as in command of a flying column, usually composed of mounted troops only. Later, when the French under General Humbert landed in County Mayo, we read how "Lieutenant-Colonel Craufurd (Deputy-Quarter-Master-General) was sent forward to Castlebar with a strong patrol of Lord Roden's Fencibles and Hompesch's Dragoons, but not having any Infantry with him, he did not push any further that day." There is much more about "the Corps under Craufurd's orders" near Ballinrobe and Castlebar, and how "Lieutenant-Colonel Craufurd, who had never lost sight of the Enemy, came up close to their rear-guard on 7 September." Humbert was surrounded and surrendered on the following day. Lord Cornwallis, in his despatches to the Duke of Portland of 9 September 1798, writes that "Lieutenant-General Lord Lake particularly mentions Lieutenant-Colonel Craufurd, of whose zeal, spirit and abilities too much indeed cannot be said, and whose exertions were admirably seconded by a Detachment of Hompesch's Dragoons."

After the Rebellion was crushed Craufurd reverted to his duties as D.Q.M.G., and a few months later, 1799, he was selected to go once again on a military mission to the Austrian Headquarters during Suwaroff's campaign in Switzerland. How long he was there is uncertain, but it could not have been many months, for upon the British Expedition to the Helder being decided upon, Craufurd was recalled from Switzerland and appointed

to the Duke of York's Staff in Holland. In this ill-fated expedition the first troops landed in August 1799, and the last were withdrawn in November.

After the Helder Expedition Craufurd returned to his duties as D.Q.M.G. in Ireland. On 11 January 1801 his brother Charles writes to him in Dublin, asking him if he does not think it would be worth his while to persevere in his intention to raise a foreign regiment for East Indian service.¹ From this it is clear that at the time he had some idea of returning to the East Indies. Some eight months later the following appeared in the *Gazette*:—

“STAFF.

“*War Office, September 26th, 1801.*

“Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Craufurd of the 60th Foot (Deputy Quarter-Master-General in Ireland) to be Adjutant-General to His Majesty's Troops stationed in the East Indies.”

At this time Craufurd had been borne on the roll of the 60th for close upon four years, and as we have seen, he had never done a day's duty with them. Apparently this fresh Staff appointment was the limit of their endurance, for on 11 February 1802 he was transferred as a Lieutenant-Colonel from the 60th to the 86th Regiment and as such he appears in the Army List of 1803.

Nothing is known about his appointment of A.A.G. beyond that he never went to India, for in the *Gazette* of 10 July 1802 we find: “Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Clinton of the 1st Foot Guards to be Adjutant-General to the King's Troops serving in East Indies, *vice* Craufurd who resigns.”

We must now trace the reasons for this change. Craufurd's elder brother Charles had married in 1800 the widow of Thomas, third Duke of Newcastle. (Robert himself was married on the same day.) Owing to the young Duke being a minor, Sir Charles as his guardian acquired considerable political influence, and, ever ready to help his brother, arranged for him to have a seat in the House of Commons. Accordingly on 5 July 1802 Robert Craufurd was elected M.P. for East Retford. He sat for that borough for over four years and was a regular attendant at the House and frequently spoke on military matters. It is said that at this time Parliament was so full of gentlemen with commissions in the Militia, Fencibles, Volunteers and so forth, all of whom rejoiced in the title of “Colonel,” that Craufurd as the one genuine soldier among them was known as “*The Colonel*.”

Craufurd owed much to his friendship with Windham, who obtained for

¹ General Craufurd and his Light Division, p. 10.

him various appointments. On 4 May 1804 Craufurd writes to him "I hope you will be a member of the new Cabinet and help to get me employment. My rank in the Army is much lower than it should be, because I once left the Service to pursue what seemed a promising employment in India. Thus younger men went over my head and in spite of all the Duke of York's good will, I have no chance of being employed in work of distinction or of avoiding the mortification of serving under men who should be much my junior. Till I went into Parliament all the Horse Guards did their best to prevent my feeling this lowness of rank. When I censured the Military measures of the late (Addington's) Administration I knew that I risked giving offence to the Duke of York and spoiling my professional career, but I could not let such considerations carry weight with me and my present unemployment together with information from the best quarters show me that what I expected has happened. I must therefore abandon hope of Military employment, except in case of invasion, and I ask you to secure me work in some other department. If you become Secretary of War my Military training may be of service."¹

He was undoubtedly very sore at the lack of recognition he had obtained and was in consequence inclined to grumble and scheme. Windham got Craufurd promoted to the rank of Colonel on 30 October 1805, and early in 1806 offered him the post of Under Secretary of State for War, but apparently the work was not to Craufurd's liking.

Later, in 1806 when the news reached England of Beresford touching at St. Helena on his way to La Plata, Craufurd wrote to Windham and asked to be given the command of the forces in South America with the local rank of Major-General. He pointed out that he had been "26 years in the Army deducting three years when I left it."

The outcome of this was that Windham obtained for him as a junior Colonel the command of the Expedition to the River Plate but in this he was superseded by General Whitelocke and he reverted to the command of the Light Brigade only. His gallant behaviour and misfortunes in the attack on Buenos Ayres as well as his conduct during Moore's Campaign and his subsequent fine services in the Peninsula and heroic death at the Storming of Ciudad Rodrigo are all described in this History.

It is curious that although descendants of Robert Craufurd all spell the

¹ For this and other information I am indebted to Mr. John Fortescue who kindly sent me copies of Craufurd's correspondence with Windham.

name as here given and as Craufurd himself always spelt it, various modern writers have elected to spell it incorrectly. From time to time I have called attention to this and have been met with the reply that a century ago it was spelt "Crawford," which most emphatically it was not, save through ignorance. It is perfectly true that in many of the books dealing with the Peninsular War it appears as "Crawford." Even the Officers of the Light Division spelt it thus in their Diaries and in letters to their friends in England. Small wonder then that a careless public adopted the style. But against this I can cite the following (1) Robert Craufurd's grandsons. (2) The *London Gazettes* in which Craufurd's Despatches from Austria appear and in the subsequent Gazettes when he is promoted. (3) In the Annual Army Lists 1781-1812. (4) In the Duke of Wellington's *written* Despatches. The Duke's writing was not very legible and I have seen some of his original letters in which the first "u" might be read as "w," giving "Crawfurd," but the second "u" is an unmistakable "u." There is no rendering anywhere of it as "Crawford." (5) All letters and papers bearing his own signature and that of his brother, Sir Charles Craufurd. (6) In the Wellington Despatches, edition 1838. (7) In the Wellington *Supplementary Despatches*, 1860. (8) In Napier's *Peninsular War* (edition 1851). Napier in his first edition (1834) mis-spelt the name thus "Crawfurd," but *never*, "Crawford."

Those who may wish to know more details of Craufurd's chequered career will find an article in the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* for February 1918 in which I entered fully into what I called "some obscure passages" of his life. After the appearance of this article I received a letter from Sir Charles Craufurd, Bart., a great-nephew of Robert Craufurd's, who most kindly sent me one from Robert's brother, Charles Craufurd, mentioned in this memoir, to Lord Grenville. This letter, were other proof not available, shows conclusively that Robert Craufurd *did* leave the Army in 1794, and, as it has not been hitherto published, I give an extract from it here. It is dated from "Willemstad near Francfort, 23 June 1797" and, after mentioning how his brother "Mr. Robert Craufurd" had assisted him in his mission of 1795-96-97, requests that Mr. Robert Craufurd according to the promise of the Duke of York may be "brought back to the Service and rapidly advanced, in consequence of my brother's having expressed a very strong desire to return to that profession, which he has been passionately fond of from his earliest youth, to which he has devoted himself most entirely, which he had studied profoundly with the utmost

application in all its most scientific branches, and which he has practised to the age of *Thirty* with unremitting zeal and assiduity. He quitted the Army in the East Indies at the close of the war there from finding himself, after serving fourteen years, after forming from its first being raised and constantly commanding the 75th Regiment between five or six years (two of which on actual service), still only Captain, and with no immediate prospect of further promotion. This was certainly a very particular case more especially as the 75th Regiment was allowed by Sir Robert Abercromby, and generally by all his superiors to be a pattern of military discipline. And as he had passed between four or five years, viz., from the year '83 to the year '87—at his own expense on the Continent, living with the Prussian and Austrian armies, and in the constant pursuit of his military education. He has also been with me during the two very active campaigns of '95 and '96, and has seen full as much of them and gained full as much experience by them as I did myself, because he has been constantly present at, and I may with great truth say, in the heat of every affair at all within our reach."

With regards to the spelling of the family name Sir Charles wrote to me that "in the Patent of Baronetcy, dated 20 June 1791, the name is spelt Craufurd." He adds that from about the year 1150 when the name was first assumed, it was always spelt "Craufurd" save in English documents.

APPENDIX V.

Some Notes on the Diaries, Autobiographies and Books upon which this History is based.

THE diaries kept by Lieutenant-General Hon. William Stewart covering as they do, not only the time when he was in command of the Rifle Corps, but during the many varied years of service before he raised it and subsequently, as a Commander of a Brigade and Division on active service, are of extraordinary interest. These volumes, some thirty in number, were most kindly sent to me by the Earl of Galloway, a great nephew of Sir William. Some of the more important portions of these have been printed in the "Cumloden Papers," a large quarto volume, to which reference has been made from time to time in this History.

All who have read Military Autobiographies or Diaries are well aware how common a thing it is for one veteran when writing his adventures to draw liberally on the accounts of others who have taken part in the same campaigns. Probably in no case has this been done more audaciously than in some of the books dealing with the Peninsular War, owing to Sir William Napier's famous History having offered a tempting frame-work upon which to build up personal narratives outlined in rough field-notes.

So it was that many officers who had kept such notes re-wrote their journals subsequently. Such a practice, if done soon after the events chronicled, is often a great advantage but not so if postponed for years, more especially if alterations be made.

When in 1893 George Simmons's papers were placed in my hands I found that his original field-notes were contained in three small pocket-books in paper covers measuring only a few inches square and weighing $\frac{3}{4}$ oz., 1 oz. and 2 oz. respectively. These were carried in succession by Simmons *in his head-dress* throughout the war and hence he was always able to make notes in them from day to day. But in addition to these were larger note-books containing much fuller information on innumerable points and often bearing unmistakeable signs of having been "written up" some time after the war. Thus Simmons's little fragments of history such as his

allusions to Edward the Black Prince or his soliloquies on the horrors of war are obviously later additions, but were not such as to detract from the value of the journals.

Among the mass of Simmons's letters was one from Sir Harry Smith written many years after the war urging him to publish his diary. That he did re-write it some time *after* 1829 is proved in many ways but more especially by his allusion to the Forced March, "62 miles in twenty-six hours," which showed that he must have read Napier's famous description.

In spite of these minor shortcomings the Diary contained so much genuine first-hand information and was on the whole so accurate, as comparison of the dates and entries in the field-notes showed, that I did not hesitate to publish it. Experts who have read it have pronounced it to be one of the best of the many Peninsular Diaries. Throughout it breathes the spirit of the Regiment and hence it was that I chose *A British Rifle Man* for its title. But although the journal at places is thus obviously added to or corrected from subsequent information, no such a charge can be laid to the letters to his parents. For all these bear the post-mark of the "Falmouth Packet" and so are unquestionably "written on the spot." Thus, it will be recalled how in his letter to his father written soon after the event Simmons gives the Forced March as "52 miles in twenty-four hours."

Without doubt the man who kept the most accurate records of the deeds of the 95th Rifles in the Peninsula and at Waterloo is Colonel Jonathan Leach C.B. His book *Rough Sketches in the Life of an Old Soldier* published in 1831 is full of valuable information.

As already stated Leach's *original* Diaries as well as some of his letters, have been placed at my disposal. These diaries are contained in four pocket-books of which the first three unquestionably were kept in the field. Leach had a bitter hatred for Craufurd as many of the entries in his field diaries show. I have given a few of the milder ones as an example.

The peculiar value of Leach's diaries is that as each volume was completed it was *sent home*. Thus the first volume, describing all the deeds of the Light Division from May 1809 to September 1811 was posted to England in 1811. Hence in these diaries Leach cannot be charged with having been influenced by Napier's History. At the end of his first volume are given most important itineraries of the marches made by the Light Division in 1809-1811, the distances being all given in leagues. Copied into it also are letters describing the landing in Mondego Bay 1808, the

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Battles of Rolica and Vimeiro, the Combat of the Coa and Bussaco, all written on the spot. The fourth volume is obviously an expansion of the field notes contained in Volumes II and III (which are themselves fairly voluminous) and was written after his return to England as the water-mark of the paper (1819) shows.

Leach joined the 70th Regiment in 1801 and was appointed to the 95th Rifles as a Captain on 1 May 1806; he was made a Brevet-Major on 21 June 1813 (for Vitoria) and a Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel 18 June 1815 (for Waterloo). He became a Regimental Major in October 1819 and retired two years later. He died in 1855. He was given the General Service Medal with twelve clasps and the Waterloo Medal and a C.B.

M.S. JOURNALS OF LIEUT.-COLONEL JONATHAN LEACH, C.B. DURING THE
PENINSULAR WAR.

Number of Volume	Size	Weight	Description	Period
I.	8½ in. × 6½ in. × 1 in.	1 lb. 6 oz.	Oblong. Red leather boards. Brass clasp.	May 1809 to Sept. 1811, (Field Notes)
II.	7½ in. × 4½ in. × ½ in.	9½ oz.	Oblong. Brown leather boards. Brass clasp (broken). (Water mark 180—.)	Oct. 1811 to Sept. 1813. (Field Notes)
III.	8 in. × 6 in. × ¾ in.	15 oz.	Oblong. Canvas boards. Brown leather back. (No clasp.) (Water mark 1805.)	Sept. 1813 to July 1814. (Field Notes)
IV.	8½ in. × 6½ in. × ¾ in.	14½ oz.	Mottled paper boards. Green leather back. (No clasp.) (Water mark 1819.)	Nov. 1812. to March 1814. ("Written up" from II. & III.)

Two other officers of the 95th, whose original diaries have been kindly lent to me, are those of Major-General Sir William Cox, K.H., and his brother Major-General Sir John Cox, K.H.

William Cox joined the Rifles in 1805 and served with it in the Peninsular War from Roliça to Orthes, receiving the medal with seven clasps. He became a Captain on 16 September 1813 and after the war exchanged to the 1st Dragoons. He died in 1857.

John Cox joined the Rifles in 1808 and also served with it as a subaltern from Roliça to Orthes, receiving the medal and ten clasps. He served in the Waterloo Campaign and his notes on the British Army of Occupation 1815-1818 are of especial interest. He was promoted Captain in 1819. He died in 1863.

Both these brothers kept field diaries. John Cox's is especially good and I have reason to believe that when George Simmons "wrote up" his diary he had recourse to that of his old brother subaltern. John Cox was with the Provisional Battalion of the 95th Rifles which served in Flanders under Sir Thomas Graham before the Waterloo Campaign. He rejoined the Regiment before Waterloo.

In addition to these four complete Regimental diaries from which I have quoted so freely I have from time to time read extracts from others, also letters from many officers whose names are well known to all military students and of course more especially to those interested in the Rifle Brigade.

Among these I may mention the following:—

Lieutenant-General Sir Andrew F. Barnard, G.C.B.

Lieutenant-General Sir Harry G. W. Smith, Bart., G.C.B.

Major-General Sir Thomas Sidney Beckwith, K.C.B.

Captain Sir John Kincaid, Bart.

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BOOKS DEALING WITH THE HISTORY OF THE RIFLE BRIGADE FROM THE FIRST
FORMATION OF THE RIFLE CORPS IN 1800 TO 1918.

Name	Author
1. Remarks on Rifle Guns	Ezekiel Baker. 1800. (Several enlargements & editions up to 1826).
2. Regulations for the Rifle Corps	Coote Manningham. 1801.
3. Military Lectures delivered to the Officers of the 95th (Rifle Regiment) at Shorne-cliff Barracks, Kent	Coote Manningham. 1803.
4. Adventures in the Rifle Brigade	Kincaid. 1830.
5. Rough Sketches in the Life of an old Soldier. 411 pp.	Leach. 1831.
6. Twenty-five years in the Rifle Brigade	Surtees. 1833.
7. Recollections and Reflections relative to the Duties of Troops composing The Advanced Corps of an Army. 81 pp.	Leach. 1835.
8. Sketch of the Field Services of the Rifle Brigade from its formation to the Battle of Waterloo. 32 pp. octavo	Leach. 1838.
9. Random Shots from a Rifleman	Kincaid. 1847.
10. Recollections of Rifleman Harris	Curling (edited). 1848.
11. Alphabetical List of Officers of the Rifle Brigade from 1800 to 1850	Stooks Smith. 1851.
12. Recollections of a Rifleman's wife	Fitz Maurice. 1851.
13. Adventures of a Soldier... ..	Costello. 1852.
14. Travels and Adventures	Bugler W. Green. 1857.
15. History of the Rifle Brigade	Cope. 1877.
16. The First British Rifle Corps	Verner. 1890.
17. A British Rifle Man. (Journals of Major George Simmons)	Verner (edited). 1899.
18. Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith	Moore Smith. 1901.
19. The Rifle Brigade	Wood. 1901.
20. The Rifle Brigade Century	Boyle. 1905.
21. A Short History of the Rifle Brigade... ..	Parkyn. 1917.
22-39. The Rifle Brigade Chronicle (28 volumes) ...	Verner (edited). 1890-1918.

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11

SKETCH-MAP OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

To illustrate Campaigns of the
95th OR RIFLE REGIMENT
during the Peninsular War,

1808 - 1814.

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